

## Love of God—Second Calling

Fred R. Coulter—May 26, 1995

Many have asked, is there such a thing as a *second* calling? The reason that they ask is because many people—especially the letters I get and talking to all of you—one of the themes that comes through—feel like they are now converted, feel like that they're beginning to understand the Word of God as never before.

Here's a letter sent from Australia that I think is a very touching letter, and I'm very happy to have it.

As you know, I'm a member of the CBCG here in Melbourne. We have spoken several times over the phone. John Morgan... [who is the office manager there] ...passed on your letter of May 3<sup>rd</sup> to me last night along with the three new booklets [or books]. I would like to pass on my personal heartfelt thanks to you. I became a baptized member of the Church in 1970.

So, he's been in 23 years. Talking to different ones here, we're 23, 25, 27, 30 years; so a similar situation.

Then towards the end of 1993 I disassociated myself from the Worldwide Church of God and began fellowshipping with a Global video group.

This is also something that has happened to a lot of people. That's why we nickname ourselves the *No-hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God*, and while it maybe a little humorous, it is nevertheless very true. I think God is doing something with all of the church members, and all of the brethren, and all of the ministers.

During that time you sent me a care package.

I think this month we've sent out pretty close to 50 or 60 of them. We've been sending them out just as fast as we can get them made up.

Then in November of last year, 1994, I became a member of the Christian Biblical Church of God. In studying your material, both tapes and booklets, my eyes have been truly opened. I want to thank you and your wife for allowing yourselves to be used by God in this way. Having been in God's Church for 25 years, I would have to say that I've learned and understood

more in the past two years than in all the previous 23 years combined...."

I've heard that over and over and over again. Sometimes it makes me wonder what has happened to the Church? And in particular, what has happened to the ministry that they're not teaching them?

I was asleep at the switch, as they say, and now I'm beginning to see the enormity of Satan's con, and it is truly diabolical in the full sense of the word. I'm beginning to understand what real repentance is all about.

We're going to see the more you love God, the more you're going to understand what real repentance is all about, because you see the greatness of God.

I'm beginning to understand what a relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father is all about...

That's why They are persons, so we can have a relationship with Them.

...and it is a deeply humbling experience. Any understanding of my calling in the past was at best vague, and at worst misunderstood. It's like coming out of the fog into brilliant sunlight, if I can use that analogy. In a sense, it is a renewing or reawakening of that first love....

Well, I'm going to tell you, it is greater than a reawakening of the first love, it is a mature full-blown love coming to perfection.

and I'm deeply grateful to God for it, and to you for your help that you have given. When we meet on the Sabbath, six of us... [so just a few here and there] ...and more when my children come with me, there's a sense of unity and peace, which I haven't experienced for a long, long time. What a singular pleasure it is to sit and to listen to the Word of God, real meat, without the politics, ignorance, and downright lies. Then to sit around later over a cup-a...As we say down under, and actually talk freely about God.

Heaven forbid that was the last thing you would talk about in Worldwide. Talk about God and they thought you were nuts. It was much more interesting to talking in generalities about your job, and

the trials of daily life. And oh, how I realize how spiritually malnourished I had become.

Quite frightening, actually.

Anyway, having read your letter to the brethren, I just wanted to put some of my thoughts on paper to send to you, to thank you for all you are doing. You know, it is so frustrating to see people in the WCG, and indeed Global as well, who you know and care for, for so many years, that they are so totally oblivious to what's happening around them. Or if they see anything at all, and some do, they seem to feel powerless to act. It's as if they are in a spiritual stupor or coma. May God be merciful to them as He has been to us. I hope you don't mind putting my thoughts on paper to you like this.

I hope you don't mind me sharing it with the rest of the brethren because I think it's most important. I have letters like this over and over again. It gives us an idea of perhaps what God is doing; He is doing something. We don't understand it yet, but we all have to walk by faith. I think that what we are going to see that God truly is helping us, not just in recapturing our first love, but going beyond, because there is a *second calling*.

Let's see about this second calling. I was talking to a lady the other night and she was telling me about her church experience. 'She said, *Well, I just seem as though I wasted all those years*. I said, 'It's time to get out of the sandbox.' *I'm sorry I was in the sandbox for so long*. 'Yeah, but at least you're out.'

Here's what God wants. This is what He's doing now. There comes a time when God is preparing us for the future. We're going to see that the way that God prepares us for the future is that He wants us *to grow up in Christ*, and this is the *second calling*. That's why you see so many people who are with us that have been in the Church for years and years, and they aren't going to settle for fiddle-faddle and sandbox any longer.

- they want to know the Truth
- they want to know the love of God
- they want to know the depths of the Scriptures

God is doing something with the brethren that's going to surprise all of these ministers that think they have them all cornered in their little pocket—because God is moving in *their mind*, because *they belong to Him*. He's going to do something, and here's what it is. Here's what God wants. Here is the goal.

Ephesians 4:1, Paul says: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called... [Here is the whole process that we are going to come to. This is what everyone who's been the Church for years and years is longing for.] ...with all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 1-3).

That peace comes from God. That's why every epistle opens up: the apostle's name, like the Apostle Paul; 'Grace and peace be multiplied to you from God the Father and Jesus Christ.' We just read over that; 'that's just the introduction; I'm going to get on to important things.' ***You just left the important thing!***

Verse 4: "*There is one body... [which we're all finding out] ...and one Spirit... [I just might mention here, if you leave a church, you're not leaving the Truth.] ...even as you were also called... [God the Father does the calling] ...in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 4-7). ***Christ is giving a gift*** through His grace to every one of us, and God wants us to know that. God wants us to exercise that, and we'll see what it is.*

Then he shows the reason why, v 11: "And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints..." (vs 11-12). This is what God wants: ***that the saints be perfected***.

How are they to be perfected? *You are to become as perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect* (Matt. 5:48)—that is

- through Jesus Christ
- through the righteousness of Christ
- Christ in you with the Holy Spirit

"...for *the* work of the ministry... [for the work of serving the brethren] ...for *the* edifying... [up-building; the putting together with love] ...of the body of Christ; until we all..." (vs 12-13)—***all of us!*** Paul included himself; I include myself the more I learn, and the more I teach. Here's a principle that is true: we all receive from the fullness of Christ, *grace upon grace*, which means *Christ is never going to run dry*, and we just have to drink in of it and learn of it. So, the more I learn and teach, the more you learn, which means the more I learn—because as I teach it God will give me more. That's how this happens. It doesn't happen any other way.

"...for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith... [with

God's Spirit] ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God..." (v 13). We're going to see that part of loving God is *knowing* God; you are to *know* Him. He wants you to *know* Him. He's revealed Himself through His Spirit and His Word.

"...unto a perfect man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**... [That's what God wants. That is your *second calling*, right there.] ...so that we no longer be children... [we get out of the sandbox] ...tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." (vs 13-14).

Isn't that what has happened? Just like the wind—*whoosh*—here comes another change—*whoosh*—here comes another change—*whoosh*—here comes another change. 'What do I believe?' *I don't know!* 'How does that come?' *By the sleight of men!* 'Who says I'm doing away with the Sabbath?' *Ten days later it's all right to work on the Sabbath!* 'Who says I'm doing away with the Holy Days?' *Ten days later it's not required!* 'Who says I'm doing away with clean and unclean meats?' *It's all right to eat them!*

"...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error..." (v 14). It's almost as if they can't wait to hatch up another diabolical lie. That's why you have to get away from them.

- Do you want to stay where there are lies?
- Do you want to stay where they're preaching the doctrine of Balaam?
- That it's okay to sin in the name of God?
- Do you want to go in the way of Cain, to force God to accept your sin as truth? *No!*

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love... [*second calling*] ...may in all things grow... [everything in your life] ...up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ." This is how Christ looks at the Church, not how we do. Most men don't even see Christ. Most men only see an organization. You've got to see Christ, not the organization.

Verse 16: "From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [Every one of us! We all have something we can supply and give, because God has given gifts to us—hasn't He? *Yes!*] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love." That's a brief description of the *second calling*.

Let's review, because this becomes very important; this is why we need to understand the love of God even more. I don't think that we can preach long enough, or loud enough, or understand enough about the love of God, because we know that

the love of God is greatest, and we know the love of God never fails. If we preach that, we know we're not going to fail—right? We know we are preaching the greatest thing we can preach—correct?

The love of God does not come because we all get together and we generate our own love for each other, and then say, 'Hey, world, look at us! We're loving each other. Therefore, we love God.' NO! The love of God doesn't come that way. The love God comes from the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. The love of God comes *from God to you*, because you fellowship with Him. The love of God comes because you go to God and ask Him for His love. When you do, you're going to see you need far more of His love than you have ever had. It's going to be an overwhelming experience when you really come to understand that.

1-John 4:6: "We are of God... [v 5]: ...They are of the world... [Who are of the world? *The antichrists who deny Jesus!*] ...they speak of the world, and the world listens to them." 'Oh my, isn't that wonderful? This church is not a cult anymore.' They believe in the trinity; and you can even eat unclean meats; and you can keep Christmas and Easter, and even go to church on Sunday.

...and the world listens to them.... [because they are of the world] ...We are of God; the one who knows God... [You have to be knowing; a present tense, on-going relationship with God.] ...listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 5-6).

When we grow up from being children we put away the childish things. Isn't that what Paul said concerning love? *When I became a man and put away childish things*. When we grow up into Christ and we put away childish things, then we know. God expects us to use our mind! He gave us a mind very much like His. He expects us to exercise judgment, discernment and understanding. ***We are to know the difference between Truth and error.***

Verse 6: "By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception."

- we are to understand it
- we are to see it
- we are to examine it
- we are to prove it

That's what we're all going through; and that's what every minister is going to find out. No more little fairy tales from the pulpit, and no more little lies for control, because they're going to come up and confront you with the Truth, and you'll be able to understand the spirit of error.

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is **from** God...” The Greek word is ‘ek’—*out from and into; comes from God*. That’s the greatest characteristic that God has: His love. He wants us to have it. He doesn’t want us to be anything less than He is. That’s how we’re going to exist in the Family of God, *by love*. That’s why the Church is not to be like a corporate organization of the world. Is there any love in a corporate organization of the world? *No!* What happens? *Corruption, lies, cheating, bankruptcy!* Do we see the same thing spiritually with the churches we’ve been associated with? *Absolutely!* It’s based on love, because **love comes from God**.

“...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God... [because you have the seed of the begetting of God the Father and is loving] ...and knows God” (v 7). There are several ways we know God. God doesn’t want us to just say, ‘I know; I think I know; I hope I know.’ He wants it to be far different.

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him...” We *know* that **we know**. And that’s all a part of growing up in the maturity of Christ that you *know that you know*. A lot of Churches of God like to condemn other churches of God and say that they’re Laodiceans, and they’re going into the Tribulation. Well, we don’t know whether they are or not, but I know one thing, you’re going to go into Tribulation if you don’t know God and if you don’t love Him.

We have to know “...that we know Him: 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, truly in this one the love of God is **being perfected**....” (vs 3-5).

That’s what we need to be doing, brethren. That is the reason for our second calling—that **the love of God is being perfected in each one of us**. We don’t have time for power struggles; we don’t have time for fairy tales; we don’t have time for carnality and vanity. We’ve all been through that—haven’t we?

- now is the time to *grow up in love*
- now is the time to *grow up in Christ*
- now is the time to *be perfected in the love of God*
- now is the time to *grab hold of the second calling*

“...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 is the high standard— isn’t it? That is the second calling!

I’m accused of minister-bashing. Well, I tell you what, every minister, I am tired of **brethren-bashing**; that every time something’s wrong with *you*, the brethren are at fault.

1-John 4:8: “The one who does not love **does not know God** because God is love.” If you’re not teaching it—I don’t care if you use the Bible, I don’t care if you use the name of Jesus Christ—**you don’t know God!** Do you know the love of God? Have you gone on your knees and just said, ‘O God, I just don’t really have a clue as to what love is. Please help me. Please teach me. Please give me Your Spirit. Please grant me understanding.’

You stay there, and you keep at it, and there’s going to come a time when, in praying, understanding about the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ, that God’s Spirit is going to convict you in heart and mind and emotion, that you are going to experience the love of God. And when you do it will be an overwhelming experience of real Truth and cleansing that you have never, ever, ever experienced in your life! About the only thing you can do is just sort of bawl and blubber and run through the Kleenex box about as fast as you can go, thanking God and just praising Him for the love that He’s given you. Now that’s not something that you do in public. That’s between you and God, because Christ is in you through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reason they don’t know God is: “...because God is love. In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us...” (vs 8-9). This is the whole thing that’s so important; we need to understand. Even in the Old Testament, or the covenant with Israel, in Deut. 6 it says: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being.’ Isn’t that in the Old Testament too? *Yes!*

It’s also in the New Testament and Jesus quoted it. But the New Testament love of God, *God wants us to know something greater than that*. He wants us to know that **He loved us first**. Think on that!

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). Not that we can go around and play silly emotional games, and then tell the world, ‘Look, we love God, aren’t we great? Aren’t we marvelous? Aren’t we just wonderful? Come and join us.’ **NO!**

He loved us first. Christ came when no one on earth loved Him—*no one*. So, the next time you go through a trial or you think that things are bad for you, remember: outside of Mary loving Him,

motherly love, no one truly loved Him except God the Father. That's why He said, 'I always do the things that please Him; I love the Father and the Father loves Me.' We are to grow up into Christ and in that relationship.

"...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (v 10). Tremendous thing, brethren. **Ongoing source of mercy and forgiveness**—that's what a propitiation is.

- God knows you're weak
- God knows you're sinful
- God knows that you have 'the law of sin and death' in you
- God knows that you have carnal nature

Even the Apostle Paul said, 'Oh, who is going to deliver me from this body of death? I do the things I don't want to, and the things I want to I don't do. When I find out that I haven't done what I want to—what I really want to do is do the things that please God—I find that I'm just battling and warring and that it's just such a horrible thing. Oh, wretched man! Who's going to save me from the body of this death?'

And he said the next breath, 'I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is going to save me from the body of this death. So, **with my mind I serve the Law of God**, but **with the flesh the law of sin and death**.' Because you still have it in you. God's perfection is going to be in love with you. God's perfection is not going to make you perfect in the flesh. That is not God's desire. That's why He gave you the flesh, so you understand you are not perfect. But you can be perfect in love. You can be perfect in serving God in faithfulness. Yes, you can!

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another.... [Now you see why we love each other, *because of the love of God first*.] ...No one has seen God at any time...." (vs 11-12). That we could even say, 'I saw God. I got the inside track on love here.' I know what that's all about—*no way*.

"...Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us..." (v 12). That's what it is—**Christ is living in us**. That's what's so profound and important. That's what the perfection is that He wants.

"...and His own love is perfected in us" (v 12). That's what God wants. **That is the second calling!** That's why we're doing what we are doing, brethren. That's something!

- God wants you to *feel* it
- God wants you to *experience* it
- God wants it to be an *emotion*

- God wants it so that it is *in your mind*

Not only is it an emotion, but you understand it intellectually and powerfully with His Spirit. **It's perfected in us!**

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." This is what is so important: **God has given us of His Spirit**. It's not just membership in a corporate body. **You belong to God the Father; you belong to Christ!** We have His Spirit.

1-John 3:19: "And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth..." We **know!**

- you have to **know** the Truth
- you have to **know** the error
- you have to **know** you are of the Truth *with God's love*
  - you can have that with **conviction**
  - you can have that with **strength**
  - you can have that with **hope**

"...and shall assure our hearts before Him, that if our hearts condemn us..." (vs 19-20)—because we've sinned or done something we shouldn't. Doesn't that happen when you sin? *Your heart condemns you!* You feel, 'Oh my, oh I hate to go to God and pray.' Well, go to God and pray, and when you say, 'Oh my, I've done this and I shouldn't'—and *you know you shouldn't*. When you don't feel like going to God to pray, *that's when to go pray*, right there! Why?

Because: "...God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things" (v 20). If you know you've sinned, with God's Spirit *in* you does He know you've sinned? **Sure He does!** He's provided Christ for you.

Verse 21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us... [When there are times when we know we haven't sinned, we have been doing what is right] ...*then* we have confidence toward God"—don't we? **Much more at that time!** I've experienced it; you've experienced it. That's all part of growing up into Christ.

Verse 22: "And whatsoever we ask... [It won't be in the time that we think, necessarily, but *it will happen*.] ...we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight." [That's what God wants; that's what you want. That's what your second calling is all about: *that you are doing the things that please God!* You're out of the sandbox. You're out of third grade, and hopefully you're way beyond; you're in college.

Verse 24: "And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ,

and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us. And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him...” We have been *loving* God and you’re dwelling *in* Him. You’re keeping His commandments and you are dwelling in Him and Christ.

“...and He in him... [the one who’s keeping the commandments]. ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us **by the Spirit which He has given to us**” (v 24). That’s what’s missing, brethren! ***They haven’t been shown the love of God to let the Spirit of God dwell in them:***

- in strength
- in power
- in them in love
- in faith

But God is going to draw them so they will. I think there’s going to be a lot of surprises for a lot of people, because God is going to do what He’s going to do, and it ‘ain’t’ going to be according to any of *their* plans. You can guarantee that. “...**by the Spirit which He has given to us.**”

1-John 4:13: “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. And we have seen *for* ourselves [apostles] and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world” (vs 13-14). He’s including us in that, in saving the world. Did you know that? That’s why we’re the firstfruits. He’s including us in that salvation for the world. We’ve got to be first. You can’t feed the world, you can’t save the world, unless you have a means of doing it. Christ is the One Who’s going to provide the way.

You look out there at that sin-sick world. Yes, we can all get mad, and yes, we can point fingers, and yes, we can say this, that and the other thing and understand all the corruption that’s going on. Yes, we can do that, that’s fine. We understand that. But don’t just dwell on that, because there’s another reason for it all. God is going to turn it all around. Can you imagine what’s going to happen when God opens the minds of the Jews? Think on that! Just as they’ve tried to force their way down everyone else, guess what’s going to happen? *They’re going to let it be known about Jesus Christ in a way that is going to be pretty powerful—the whole world will hear!*

Romans 8:14—this is important, because we’re talking about the Spirit of God: “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God... [God’s Spirit has to lead you. It’s not going force you, ***it will lead you!***] ...these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship... [sonship—not adoption—because we have the Spirit of God in us]

...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 14-17). That will come when we are born from the dead at the resurrection.

“...if indeed we suffer together with Him...” (v 17). People want to try and go through this Christian life without suffering. Jesus suffered! Paul suffered! Paul even came to the point that he suffered so much he said, ‘Oh if I can just be partakers of the suffering of Christ to obtain the resurrection!’ Now, I haven’t come to that point yet. That’s a hard point to come to. But he understood the suffering of Christ.

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.” There is no comparison. Think of this the next time you get down, miserable and depressed and just feeling bad: *just take and turn it all the other way around, and just think what God is going to do when we’re in His Kingdom—completely the other way around.*

Verse 19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God... [We’re going to help save the world; that’s what he’s saying. Christ is the Savior, but we’re going to help Him.] ...Because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly... [That’s why they don’t know what they’re doing. That’s why God has to call them.] ...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. For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now” (vs 19-22). That is waiting for the manifestation of it.

God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. He came and everyone hated Him. He came and no one wanted Him, even His brothers mocked Him and said, ‘Well you know, no man does these things in the corner. Why don’t You go up to Jerusalem and show off a little bit?’ So, He stayed back and waited till they were gone, then He went up.

1-John 4:15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God... [This is a true confession of the Truth with the Spirit of God.] ...And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love... [this is what we are to grow up into] ...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (vs 15-16). We are going to see how we’re going to have that love grow, because there

are some ways we can.

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God **is perfected** within us... [It is a process. Love is a growth. Love is what you grow up into to be perfected.] ...That we may have boldness in the day of judgment...” We don’t have to worry. Our names are written in the book of Life. Christ has paid for our sins. He is the propitiation to cover for us. He is the One Who imputes to us His righteousness to overcome our mistakes.

If we’re having the love of God perfected in us we have boldness in the ‘day of judgment.’ We don’t have to worry, because when we come up before the judgment seat of God the Father and Jesus Christ, your name is going to be there, and Christ is going to say, ‘Father, I covered that.’ You think on that! Next time you think you’ve sinned that you can’t repent, remember Manasseh. You go back and read 2-Chron. 33 [transcriber’s correction] about Manasseh. God forgave him. He can forgive you.

Here’s why: “...because even as He is, so also are we in this world... [That’s really a tall order to grow up to—isn’t it?] ...as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God... [That’s why it’s so damnable to try and run a church on fear. There is no fear.] ...rather, perfect love casts out fear... [It is a process—*casting out*. You have fears? Cast all your fears upon Christ, for He cares for you. It’s casting out fear] ...because fear has torment...” (vs 17-18). You know and I know when we’ve been fearful we’ve had nothing but torment and grief and wonder and sleepless nights and upset stomachs and migraine headaches—right? *Yes!*

“...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.... [That’s what God wants us to be, *perfected in love*. We need to work at that. When we grow in faith, when we grow in hope, when we grow in love, that is *being perfected* and it’s *casting out fear*.] ...We love Him because He loved us first” (vs 18-19).

Now here the test, v 20: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?” That’s why Jesus said, ‘You’ve heard it said in the past, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecutes you.’ And when you do there will be a blessing, you can be guaranteed. That is hard to do. But when you do there is a blessing, and you will understand this.

Now, if you pray and ask God to help you overcome and grow in love, don’t be surprised if a little trial comes tooling down the road. That is an answer to prayer. An answer to prayer is not a

removal of a trial. An answer to prayer is overcoming a trial. You can’t accomplish spiritual things by physical means. It has to be by spiritual things, by spiritual love, by spiritual faith, by spiritual hope.

Verse 21: “And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother.”

If you have an Interlinear you can read the first part of 1-John 5. I will read it the way that it is in the Greek. 1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat... [you’re loving the Father] ...also loves him who has been begotten by Him.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God... [now notice how this comes] ...**when we love God**... [that’s always first] ...**and keep His commandments**. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (vs 2-3). They’re not grievous. They’re not hard to do. Did God ever give us a commandment we could not keep? He gave us mighty, powerful, spiritual goals to attain—didn’t He? Did He not give us His Spirit to attain it? If God says we’re going to be perfected in love, is not God going to give us His Spirit to do so? *Yes, He is!* Absolutely, without a doubt, because God loves us and Christ loves us.

We’re going to see what love can do for us. This is going to be a *can-do, how-to*. Now let’s understand something: *If you kind of fail at it at first, don’t worry, keep at it, it has to be perfected!* Let’s look at it another way. If you have to grow and overcome, are you perfect? *No!* So therefore, in order to grow and overcome and be perfected in love, you have to have experiences to do it—don’t you? *Yes, you do!* Some of the experiences are very, very tough. It would be nice if they were all easy. It would be really nice if it will be just like taking a hot knife and cutting through butter. Man, we would think, ‘Wow! We’re really doing it.’ But I want you to know something that’s very important.

1-Corinthians 13:8: “**Love never fails...**” Can God fail? *No!* Is God love? *Yes!* **Love never fails.** So what you are doing, then, is doing something that will not fail. You may not get the reaction you want, that you think you should have at first, but it’s still never going to fail. God has given the promise. **It will not fail!** Now, if in this life it’s not totally achieved, it will be accomplished when you have a chance as a spirit being. Just think how our love is going to be perfected when we’re resurrected. Just think what that’s going to be like. Love never fails.

Verse 13: “And now, these three remain... [lives—these are living things] ...**faith**... [which I think is like the precious stones (1-Cor. 3<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>)] ...**hope**... [which I think is like the silver] ...and **love**... [which I think is like gold] ...but the greatest of these *is* love.” That’s what God wants.

It is absolutely amazing how that when you really practice it, when you really understand it, and begin to understand it, the more you realize how much more you have to learn; how much more you realize that in order to have your love perfected, you’ve got to really draw close to God, let His Spirit be in you. This gives you motivation to pray. Instead of having a sermon from a minister, ‘Brethren, you haven’t been praying and studying!’ BAM! BAM! BAM!

I remember one time a minister came from Pasadena to Torrance, California, and he got up there, and he gave a bombastic sermon, *14 Reasons Why Your Prayers Aren’t Answered*. We all sat there and, boy, we got...*WHEW!* We knew every one of those sayings kept us from getting answered prayer—right? It got done, I was driving home I said, ‘My, he could have just told us one way to get our prayers answered.’ That would’ve been helpful—right? If you’re preaching the love of God, that you want to drink in of the love of God, then you are going to have every reason in the world **to pray**—isn’t that correct? *Yes!* That’s the way God wants it done.

After he gets done explaining all their vanity in 1-Cor. 12, and the different parts of the way the church is; then in 1-Cor. 14 he discusses it a little bit more about their vanity. 1-Corinthians was written on how a church should *not* be. I imagine the Apostle Paul was nearly pulling out his hair and his beard trying to figure out this renegade church over in Corinth. I even remember a minister saying one time, ‘I wonder why it’s in the Bible?’ Today we know, because of every heresy that we have had.

Notice how Paul does it in 1-Corinthians 12:31: “But earnestly desire [covet] the more *edifying* gifts; and yet I show you a way far surpassing *all these*.” I’m going to show you something that is better than any other gift that can be.

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.... [just so much noise and dissidence] ...If I have ... [Applying it to himself. This is for every minister to read and study, so that he knows how to conduct his ministry.] ...*the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...” (vs 1-2).

It really doesn’t matter how much you know, really doesn’t matter how much you *can* know, how much *I* can know. When we get all done, and we pull ourselves up to our greatest height and stand before God, we’re going to feel like the smallest little midgets that have ever been around, if we try all that vanity to think how important we are. That’s what happened to Job—wasn’t it? *Yes, it was!*

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, **I am nothing**” (v 2). *I’m nothing!* Would be a lot of people who would like to have faith like that. I would love to have faith that I could just, help people the way that God would want to have them helped. But we have to grow in love first, **then God will!** Who knows? *God wants to know!* Are you going to grow in love? After this thing is done or you pray for the person, are you going to continue to love them? Are you going to continue pray for them? Are you going to continue to think about them? *or* Is this sort of like an assembly line—next—and on down the line? Not so! **You’re nothing!** If you don’t have love it doesn’t matter.

Let’s put it this way: though you have all knowledge to reorganize your church in any way you want to, **if you don’t have love, it is nothing! It is going to fail, guaranteed!** God is going to make sure that you understand that if you don’t love Him it really, really doesn’t matter what you do.

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods (to feed the poor)... [and have notoriety in the newspaper and on television] ...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained **nothing**.”

That’s why when you go to Matt. 7 all those coming up and saying, ‘Lord, look what I did in Your name! Boy, I did this, I cast out demons.’ He said, ‘I don’t know you. You get away from Me, you that work iniquity.’ If you don’t love God and keep His commandments, it doesn’t matter what you can do. You can use the name of Jesus Christ day and night forever, but if you don’t love Him, it’s futile; it’s vain; it’s taking His name in vain. And besides, there are going to be a lot of things that were done, that people have done, that Christ is going to come along and say, ‘I didn’t ask you to put My name on that.’

Now here’s what love is going to do, v 4: “Love is patient...” In all of this ‘love *is suffering long* (KJV). So, the more love you get, maybe the more suffering you’re going to endure. I don’t know. But love will help you bear it.

I know one of the founding members of our congregation out there in California was a diabetic, she was nearly blind, she had cramps in her legs, and



couldn't get her muscles straitened out. She had a cane, she had to walk, she had to be moved around in a wheelchair. And yet, people would call her and she would cheer them up. People would be depressed—and she had every reason to be—yet, she gave them hope. Then her husband all of a sudden had a stroke. He was rejected out of Worldwide because He smoked—he was a *'bad man.'* So, when he was told to leave, he never went back again. She asked me about it and I said, 'Just pray that God will work it out.'

Well God worked it out in the way that she never expected. Here she was, crippled, in a wheelchair, couldn't see, had to fix for her husband. BANG! He comes down with a massive stroke and almost dies, and is in the hospital for two months. He comes home, had to have all the nursing and everything there. Well what happened, he quit smoking; and his mind came back; he asked to be baptized and I had the pleasure of doing it. See, 'all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to *His* purpose.' Not the way we think. But that was good. We all learned. We all prayed. And then, lo and behold, his test was, she died first. I remember at the funeral he said, 'O God, why did You take her?' And I told him, 'Because she was ready'—and he understood that.

Verse 4: "Love is patient... [suffers long] ...and is kind... [*patiently enduring*] ...love envies not... [Not looking at what someone else does and then think, 'Oh, boy, I got to have that.' No jealousy, not affected by covetousness.] ...does not brag about itself... [Haven't we heard that? *I am the greatest! I am the only! God called me!* Well, **God called all the brethren, my friend!**] ...is not puffed up." *To puff up or to inflate.* We all have to remember ***we have nothing we didn't receive.***

Verse 5: "Love does not behave disgracefully..." Which means it's going to have proper understanding. It's going to be gracious. It's not going to be crude or rash, telling dirty jokes. Do you think God was pleased that down at the college where they had the handball court up in ministers' lounge that they had up there, after they got done playing racquetball, they all sat around and told dirty jokes? Do you think God was pleased with that? *No!* That's rash behavior. That's unseemly. That's improper conduct.

"...does not seek its own things... [No hidden agenda, no preaching for self-serving. Helping, loving, outgoing.] ...is not easily provoked... [Doesn't say you can't be, but not easily. If you are, you can overcome. God's love will do it.] ...thinks no evil" (v 5). It's not thinking and practicing living in evil; doesn't do that.

This is how the world is. This is how most of television is. Here's what most of the world is doing, the way it's living, the way it's conducting its life. "...thinks no evil."

- not planning it
- not plotting it
- not scheming it
- not trying to undercut the boss
- not trying to take
- not trying to get ahead by putting down

not thinking: How I can become a tattletale and run off to the minister and get this person in trouble so I can get their job?

Here's what happens when you have that kind of behavior, Romans 1:28: "And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge..." Not even God! We're to have the laws and commandments of God written in our heart and our mind, not only to retain God in our knowledge, but let God *dwell* in us.

"...God abandoned them to a reprobate mind... [which means void of judgment] ...to practice *those* things that are immoral; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness..." (vs 28-29). Sounds like I'm reading tonight's television program—right?

"...malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers... [sounds like Washington, D.C.—doesn't it?] ...slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, Void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful... [you can't move them] ...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*" (vs 29-32). Brethren, our day is coming when Christ returns. We're going to be able to undo every one of these things. What we're going to have to do is show them the love of God.

1-Corinthians 13:6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity... [Doesn't find that that's happiness and joy; it's sorrowful.] ...but rejoices in the Truth." Always in the Truth. When you study the Bible and you come across something and learn it for the first time, don't you rejoice? Aren't you happy? Doesn't it lift you up? Doesn't it give you an exhilaration? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 7: "Love bears all things... [regardless of what it is] ...believes all things... [That are right, good, true, and believe everything that Jesus Christ said? *Yes!*] ...hopes all things..." Even the worst sinner can be brought to repentance—can he not? Did not God call Saul, who was called Paul, who

wrote what we are reading? Do you not think that he understood the love of God, coming from where he did? *Yes, indeed!* So, there's hope. I pray that every one of the ministers repent. I pray that all the brethren repent. I pray that God reaches out into each one of their lives, so they can grow up in Christ. They ought to. *There's hope!*

"...endures all things" (v 7). Regardless of what happens, *you endure it*. Sometimes it's tough to take. Sometimes you have to grit your teeth. Sometimes you don't understand. But it "...endures all things."

Verse 8: "Love never fails. But whether *there be* prophecies... [Oh, and we've had so many—haven't we? *Yes!*] ...they shall cease..." None of God's will. These are prophecies of men, in the name of Christ. Jesus said, 'Heaven and earth will pass away but My words won't.' You can be guaranteed every prophecy of God is going to be fulfilled right to the jot and tittle, because that's what Jesus said—right? *Yes!* These are prophecies of men.

"...whether *there be* languages... [People get all excited and so uplifted that they can speak.] ...they shall cease..." (v 8). I guarantee you one thing, we're not going to speak Hebrew in the Kingdom of God. We're going to speak whatever language God puts in our new spirit brain when we're resurrected. Just like He put language in Adam's and Eve's minds when He created them. We're gone to communicate with God, whatever language it's going to be. Please understand this—speaking of sacred names—there is no such thing as a *sacred language*. God is Holy, God is true, God is pure. But do Hebrews or Jews have pagan worship and pagan names within their language? *Yes, they do!* Just as pagan as anything else. So, tongues [languages] will fail.

"...whether *there be* knowledge... [as we know it now] ...it shall vanish away For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (vs 8-10). It's going to be replaced with the perfect thing. That's why God wants us perfected in His love. With all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our being, and everything that is within us.

Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child... [That's why I said there is the second calling. We need to grow up.] ...I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child." That's why with everything we do, we need to grow up in Christ, be mature in Him. Isn't that something? And for a lot of us we don't have too many years left to do that. That's why God wants it now. He's not

going to wait around for all these politicians to try and figure out what they're going to do. God is going to sweep it right away from them.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face... [That shows God is a person. You're going to see God face-to-face, Christ face-to-face. We'll see Him as He is, because we'll be like Him.] ...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 grow up into and be perfected, brethren. *That's what God wants*. That's how He wants it done. Because God is creating His family, and God has a place for every one of us, that is so profound, that is so great, that is so marvelous.

This is absolutely stunning! You will experience this, too, everyone who loves God will. There will come a time when you can't sleep at night, and you're going to lie there and think about God, and you're going to lie there and think about His love. It's like David said, 'You try me in the night seasons; You try my reins.' He talked a lot with God while he was lying in bed. I tell you one thing, God's love and the understanding of His plan will come at times so overwhelmingly that all you can do is lie there and thank God and cry.

That will happen—I don't care how tough you are; I don't care what your intelligence is; I don't care what it may be—when God gives you, with His Spirit, the grasp of what He's giving you, it is overwhelming! It will increase your love, and will increase your ability to love God, and will make your salvation greater, and your joy greater. You will grow up in Christ!

1-Corinthians 2:9: "But according as it is written, '*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*'" Remember, Jesus said, 'If I go, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go I will come again.' He's preparing the whole universe for us, brethren.

Verse 10: "But God has revealed *them* to us..." The only way we have understanding is by His Spirit. *It must be revealed!* You can't go to the world and get it, because *they don't know!* You can't go to the rulers of the world and say, 'Tell me what life is all about.' *They don't know!* You can't go to the religious leaders of the world and say, 'Tell me what life is all about'—*they don't know!* *God has to reveal it!*

"...by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God. For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way

also, the things of God no one understands except by the Spirit of God” (vs 10-11). God wants us to grow up into it.

Here we’ve got the whole Bible, brethren. **All of God’s Word!** Yet, the Church of God is *asleep at the switch* and *throwing away knowledge* when we ought to be literally delving into the Bible and just gaining as much as we can out of it. When we’ve done that, we realize there so much more because the reality is going to come. This is the foretaste; the reality is going to be the resurrection.

Even the deep things of God “...no one understands except by the Spirit of God. Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so **that we might know**... [God wants us to know to the very most of our utmost being] ...the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by the Holy Spirit...” (vs 11-13). Remember, we were promised that the Spirit of Truth **will lead us into all Truth**; and the greatest Truth is going to come at the resurrection. That is going to be powerful. And I tell you, there’s one man I want to meet, it’s Paul.

Verse 13: “Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by the Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*.”

That’s how we understand it. That’s what Paul was trying to teach this renegade, carnal church. ‘You’re wasting your whole time out there, people; you’re carnal. Build on Christ. Get rid of the sin out of your lives. Don’t go court with each other; don’t fornicate; don’t brag that you eat things before idols, and that you can speak in tongues.’

He ends up, 1-Cor. 13 saying that the love of God is the way it is, then he finishes with 1-Cor. 15 on the resurrection. What a marvelous piece of writing that God inspired. This is tremendous, that **God loves us so much, that He gave this**, so we can find our way out of the trouble. He put Paul through misery to write this epistle so that today *we know*. That’s absolutely powerful!

Here’s what the love of God will do for you—Psa. 63. This is written by David, a man after God’s heart. Brethren, what’s wrong with being after God’s heart? *That’s what God wants!* He doesn’t want our hand, He doesn’t want our legs, He doesn’t want our body; **He wants our heart**—wholly, completely, devoted to Him. He, with His heart, wholly—completely devoted to you—and all of the brethren **He can perfect the love** of all the brethren in the world! That, God can do! Here’s how we need to respond back to God. It’s how David did it.

Psalms 63:1: “O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You! My soul thirsts for You...” What did Jesus say? ‘*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*’—right? *Yes!* God wants to fill you.

“...My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Your power and Your glory—... [That’s going to be a magnificent thing to see the power and glory of God.] ...as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your loving kindness...” (vs 1-3). The very love of God, the very grace of God

“...is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness... [think of that spiritually] ...and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life to destroy it shall go into the depths of the earth” (vs 3-9). God will take care of all the enemies!

Verse 10: “They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a serving for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone who swears by Him shall glory, but the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped” (vs 10-11). It almost sounds like the end of the book of Revelation—doesn’t it?

Now let’s let God inspire us, and uplift us. You want to know what we’re going to do on the Sea of Glass? Psalms 149:1: “O praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints... [That’s us, resurrected on the Sea of Glass—right?] ...Let Israel rejoice in his Maker... [yes, we are created in Christ Jesus] ...let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the drum and lyre, for the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He crowns the meek with salvation” (vs 1-4)—in a way that we cannot see, or comprehend, or understand.

I tell you what, whenever I get discouraged and down this is where I turn, because these are the words of God that can help you. If there’s any part of the Bible to wear out this is it:

Ephesians 3:14: “For this cause... [for the very love of God] ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory... [coming from the very radiant being of God Himself] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man” (vs 14-16).

- to give you the strength
- to give you the love
- to give you the hope
- to give you the faith
- to give you the conviction
- to give you the desire

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [living in you, Christ in you *the hope of glory*] ...*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [That’s what you’re to be rooted and grounded in. That’s what you’re to be never move from, the very love of God.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [***God want you to know***] ...what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [the ***magnificent plan of God***] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [No knowledge in the world will give it to you but His love.] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.... [And brethren, that is your ***first and second calling***. He gives this promise to make sure you know it is guaranteed]: ...Now, to Him Who is able... [that means has the power] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think... [above that] ...according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 17-21).

Brethren, in the Family of God, ***we are going to love each other, it’s going to be such a marvelous existence being with God the Father and Jesus Christ***, and to be able to show the love of God to this whole sin-sick world. ***That is your calling!***.

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

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- 1) Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16
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- 6) 1 John 4:13-14
- 7) Romans 8:14-22
- 8) 1 John 4:15-21
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- 10) 1 Corinthians 13:8, 13
- 11) 1 Corinthians 12:31
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- 16) Psalm 63:1-11
- 17) Psalm 149:1-4
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