

Paul and Love

Fred R. Coulter—January 7, 1995

Love in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul other than 1-Cor. 13. There's quite a bit here showing us what love will do for us and what love will accomplish. But before we begin we have to have another love before we can have the love of God. This is something we have to have before we can really, truly love God.

2-Thess. talks about Satan coming with all power and signs and lying wonders, and I tell you, when he comes it's going to be something else; it is going to be spectacular! And the reason he's going to succeed:

2-Thessalonians 2:10: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved." In order to receive the love of God you have to have the love of the Truth first, and

- God's Word is Truth
- Christ is the Truth
- all the commandments are true
- everything that God does is true and righteous
- There is nothing that God does that is not true and righteous altogether

So, you have to come to love that before you can love God.

Then when you love God, God shows us that we have to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being. He doesn't want it part-time. He doesn't want it one day a week. He wants you to love Him completely, devoted with your whole mind and being. For people who do not have this kind of love and love the Truth and even start there, then God does something else:

Verse 11: "And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie." Is this not happening? Did we just not read part of it right here because they didn't love the Truth? Is not God's judgment coming upon one of the largest Churches of God because they don't love the Truth and don't love God? In their latest beliefs booklet they don't even have a word about it, yet, Paul says it's the greatest.

If any of you want to know what's happening to the Churches of God today it's because of the *lack of the love of Truth* and *lack of the love of God*. That's the quickest summary I can give you. When I tell you that God's judgment is because there is no love, you know that's according to the Truth and Word of God.

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold." It's happened in the Church, brethren! It's happened in the lives of too many people, and that's what we need to get back to.

Let's see what the love of God will do for us, and we're going to see that the love of God and faith together has an awful lot to do with love and faith because they go together. And remember what the Apostle Paul said. 'Faith, hope and love, they abide; but the greatest of these is love.'

There's an awful lot in the book of Romans—it's really something! The whole book of Romans is such a tremendous epistle and one of these days we'll get around to studying that. Here in Rom. 1 is something we need to understand about faith.

Romans 1:17: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed... [This is the imputed righteousness that God gives to us through Jesus Christ—*it's revealed*:] ...from faith unto faith... [And the Greek there for *to* is 'eis'—which is *into*.] ...according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'" Why shall the just live by faith? *Because that's the only way that love is going to work!*

Galatians 5:6: "Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love*." If you're loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, Christ is sending faith to you to be *in* you, and from in you back to Christ, and this helps develop and increase the love. Faith, which "*...is the inner working...*" by love. That's why faith, hope and love always go together.

Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit of God, as well as love? It has to be given! You cannot within yourself generate the love of God; *it has to come from God!* It's God's own love; same way with faith.

Is not the Holy Spirit a spiritual substance from God? *Yes, it is!* The proper use of the term 'hypostasis,' which is here, is *substance* or *foundation*. Now let's put it in it's proper context for us,

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is *the substance*..."—which comes from God, and that unites with the spirit of your mind. When you are growing and overcoming and using the Spirit of God, your mind is *being converted*. That literally means *changed*.

They know scientifically that when part of your brain is not working you can train another part of the brain to take over the same function. They have actually been able to detect that the brain reconstructs itself to make it work. This is what conversion is all about, brethren. This is why we have received the Holy Spirit as a begettal. This is why Christ is to be formed in us, as the Apostle Paul said, because the Holy Spirit is that *substance* of things hoped for—*that is faith, love, hope* and then being able to use and explain and think with the Scriptures of God.

I got a nice tape from Dwight Blevins, which really inspired me a lot and kicked off a lot of thoughts. Learning to think with the Truth and the Word of God in your mind is very, very important. That's what makes faith work; that's what makes love work.

1. Love comes from God by faith—after we have been justified

What we're going to learn here is:

- love is from God by faith
- faith is working by love

If we can think of it this way: The Word of God is like a sphere, which you can run an infinite number lines through it and an infinite number of angles, and every one of these connections is Truth agreeing with Truth.

1-Thessalonians 1:3: “Without fail, remember your **work of faith**...” That's an interesting one—*work of faith!* Remember that one whenever someone comes along and says, ‘We have faith; we don't need works.’ Then you turn here and say, ‘Ok, explain what *work of faith* is.’ Because the Greek there is ‘*ergon*’—*work of faith*.

“...and **your labor of love**... [love takes a lot of work, love doesn't come easy] ...and **your endurance** in the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father” (v 3).

- we have **faith**
- we have **love**
- we have **hope**

—all the way through all connected together.

When we have this love from God we receive it once we begin to receive it. God has given us a whole lifetime to grow and develop in love and be perfected. That's why the Word of God was meant to be a challenge for your whole life to learn and relearn, and grow in knowledge and depth and understanding over and over again to where it just becomes such a profound thing in your life, and that Christ will lead you in knowing that God loves you and has called you. *Very, very important!*

We begin to receive the love of God when we are justified Romans 4:21: “For he was **fully persuaded**...” That's what we all need to be of God, brethren, *fully persuaded*. Has God ever told us a lie? Has God ever told us anything that's not true? *No!* Should we not be fully persuaded as Abraham was?

“...that what He has promised...” (v 21). What He promised was something that He spoke—right? What was Abraham commended for? Not only faith, that's true. ‘*Abraham obeyed My voice.*’ The thing that's so important is that God only has to say it once. That's all, **just once!**

Think on this: **Shall the created tell the Creator what to do?**—as Paul said, ‘Shall the thing that's created walk up to God and say, *God I don't like this?*’ (Rom. 9). *Of course not!* Shall the thing that is created tell God what laws are good and what are not good? Which laws and commandments they should or should not keep? *Of course not!*

“...He is also able to do” (v 21). Once we get over this elementary stupidity of people arguing with God, and begin to see the fullness of God's Word, then we know that what God has for us is absolutely fantastic.

Verse 22: “As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness.” That means *right standing with God*. That's why God imputes the righteousness to us because we can never earn it or do it because we have ‘the law of sin and death’ in us. Therefore, anything we do, even though it's perfect in the letter, is automatically flawed because we ourselves are inherently imperfect. Only true perfection can come from someone who is truly perfect, Who is God. Would you not agree to that? *Yes!*

That's why with the Spirit of God *in* us God does something for us. He imputes the righteousness of Christ, not so that we can go out and break the commandments of God, but so that we can be inspired to keep them in the spirit and to do it with all our heart. That's what God wants. These things are to inspire us.

Verse 23: “But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe...” (vs 23-24). Of course, *believe* is the verb for the noun *faith*. You don't catch that in the English like you do in the Greek.

“...in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification” (vs 24-25). That's why ‘if Christ be not raised then your faith is vain

and you're still dead in your sins,' because He had to be resurrected to go to God the Father so there would be justification—the proper payment for the sins of the whole world, *that is justification!*

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace...” (vs 1-2). It's important that we understand the grace of God because this means that we do not go around with a guilty conscience. Grace is more than the forgiveness of sins. It's like a great umbrella under which we are standing, which then comes:

- God's love
- God's faith
- God's Spirit
- God's blessing
- knowledge of the commandments of God
- how to keep them in the Spirit

All of this comes by the grace of God. It is just so encompassing. So, you might say that the first expression of God's love is His grace. Or you might say the first expression of God's grace is His love, because it comes hand-in-hand to us. Please go through that and really understand that.

Notice it is something in which we are standing: “...in which we stand... [We are standing in it. It's not just a quality given. It is something which has to do with the *way of life*.] ...and we ourselves boast in *the hope*... [there again, we have *hope*] ...of the glory of God” (v 2).

Can you imagine the tremendous hope that God has given, the tremendous promise and blessing of what we are going to be? That is something, brethren. I just really don't think we have fully grasped that, but it is magnificent.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [I haven't quite arrived at that point yet, but hopefully I can begin to understand with better hindsight.] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance.” If you endure the trial or if you endure the things there, that's fine. You're going to grow.

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character...” That's what we all need—and all of us have experienced a lot of things. From experience we can know and understand what's going on. One man came up to me and said, ‘Boy, you sure know how to prophecy.’ And I said, ‘No, I don't. But one thing which will really work out: if you tell the Truth; if you compare things with the Truth it's going to happen because *the Truth is the Truth* and never changes.’ So, if we go through some of the things we've covered here and we analyze and understand what the Truth is then it's going to

happen that way. “...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been **poured out...**” (vs 4-5). That's what it means in the Greek. That's what God wants us to receive: ***His love poured out upon us!*** That's why it's very important.

I hope that God will *lead you* to this in your prayers, in your trials, in your difficulties and everything that you go through; that we'll all one day come together, and you'll be praying and you'll be asking God for His love and understanding and God's Spirit is going to convict you in heart and in mind and you are going to know the love and the Spirit of God more than ever before.

- It's going to be something you will feel!
- It will be something that you will experience!
- It will be something that you will know!
- It's something that's directly between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ!

When that happens—which it will—then you will begin to truly, truly understand the love of God and how important it is and what it will do in our lives.

“...has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time... [*at the set time*, at the *exact time* that God prophesied it would happen] ...Christ died for *the ungodly...*” (vs 5-6).

Christ did not make us go prove ourselves to Him before He would give His sacrifice to us. He died for us while we were still enemies. That takes a profound love. That's why the Protestants, even though they have a corner on the end-zone of the football games, you're going to see whenever they kick a field goal and they line up to show:

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

However they don't go beyond that in many cases. We need to understand the profound love it took for God to do that while the whole world hated Him. And not only that, when He was on the earth He was in the midst of His enemies. Even Peter gave Him a hard time, and the other disciples gave Him a hard time. Remember that? Could you take that? If you think you had a hard week, you think you've had it hard, God has dealt with you tough, and you've had a lot of trials and difficulties. Think on that for a while.

Verse 7: “For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But

God commends His own love to us... [We need to know first that God loves us first. God wants us to respond to His love because it's going to do so many things for us.] ...because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore... [now that you understand this] ...having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.... [the whole great and tremendous purpose of God] ...For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation" (vs 7-11).

2. The love of God reveals God's plan and purpose

This is so awesome and this is so great that only God can make it known to us. We can't think of it and we can't understand it on our own. We can't think of it; philosophy can't think of it; and that's the whole purpose of why Paul was writing to the Corinthians here, because they thought with wisdom: Ho-ho, they're smart, they're great intellects. Well, here's what he says,

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.*'" The love of God is going to do an awful lot for us. You have to love Him.

Notice what it will do, v 10: "But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... [Which means *the more we love God; the deeper and more profound we love God; and understand that the more God is going to reveal to us His plan and purpose.*] ...for the Spirit searches all things—even the **deep things of God.**"

Brethren, I crave and desire to know the deep things of God, and I know you do, too. Isn't that something we should all want?

- the **deep things of God!**
- to know **the profound love of God**
- to know **what Christ is doing for us** in a greater and greater way!

Oh, yes! Then that gives us hope; that heals all wounds; that gives us understanding of all the experiences we have gone through, reveals things to us.

Knowledge of this world does not do that. What is it that men have always wanted to do? When they say, 'God, we don't want You,' what do they want? *They want knowledge!* More knowledge! Has it cured the AIDS epidemic? *No!* Has it solved mans

problems? *No!* Is that not what Adam and Eve started out to do? *Yes!* 'If you eat of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will be *knowers* just like God.' That kind of knowledge, it says here, 1-Corinthians 8:1_[transcriber's correction]: "...Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."

I don't know why the translators of the *King James Version* used 'charity' there. It's just beyond me. But **love edifies!** That's what God wants. What is edification? *Edification is to build up and to inspire!* Like Solomon said, 'With much knowledge comes much sorrow' if you don't have the edification and love of the Spirit of God. It's to uplift you! It's to inspire you! Do you know what we need to do? *We need to ask God to help us just draw close to Him and fellowship with Him and Christ on the Sabbath;*

- to make the Sabbath the greatest day of the week, not just something you do because you're commanded to do
- something you do because you love God
- something you do because you're going to be inspired and uplifted

That's what God wants. He doesn't want a lot of beaten down saints, whipped and beat into the Kingdom of God. He wants us charging the gate because we're inspired. And love will do that.

Then he says concerning knowledge, v 2: "But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him" (vs 2-3). **May we have the knowledge of God!**

Let's go to Colossians 1 and let's see how this follows right through. Now remember that Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were written while Paul was in prison in Rome—the second imprisonment is what it was.

Colossians 1:8: "Who has also informed us of... [Epaphras, the minister who was teaching the Colossians] ...your love in the Spirit.... [it's got to come from God's Spirit]. ...For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will**... [that's something] ...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (vs 8-9).

That's what the love of God will do. That's something, brethren! These, to me, are a very exciting things. They're very spiritually uplifting. God is not up there trying to say, 'I'm a mystery, try and figure Me out if you can.' *No!* He says: 'I've called you. I've given you My Spirit. I want you to be in My Kingdom. I love you. I want you to grow and overcome. I want you to be able to receive the fullness of the knowledge of God.' That's something—isn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 10: “That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God” All of this comes from the Spirit of God.

Let’s see how he says it here in Ephesians 1. This is what God wants. Now, sometime if you’re sitting there and all of a sudden a thought comes to you: I wonder why God called me? Have you ever had that thought come along? Especially when you stand up and look in the mirror. Hopefully, it’s not full-length, it might get a little more discouraging. But nevertheless, **God has called us**. Why has He called you? To torment you? To put you through problems? *No! He’s called you for the greatest and most profound thing that there is: to receive His love and His knowledge!*

Ephesians 1:15: “For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints... [there again we have faith and love. We’ll see this follow all the way through.] ...Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (vs 15-16). This prayer is for all of us because it’s written here in the Word of God for us.

Verse 17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory... [Who’s going to do this? *The Father, Himself!*] ...may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.... [that’s the kind of knowledge that comes by the love of God] ...**And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...**” (vs 17-18). Isn’t that something: ‘the eyes of your understanding’? That’s pretty profound! It means what you think in the deepest recesses of your mind.

“...be enlightened in order **that you may comprehend...** [not guess, not wonder, not a mystery] ...what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power... [that’s what God wants us to know] ...toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead...” (vs 18-20).

Contrary to what they say, ‘Well, the resurrection was just kind of an ecstatic thought in the minds of the disciples, and it really doesn’t matter what happened to His corpse.’ *Yes, it does!* Don’t you believe that if He wasn’t resurrected that His corpse would have been traipsed around all over the place as evidence that He was a liar? *Yes, it would have been!* Did they not secure the tomb with guards and seal it so no one could get it? *Yes, they did!* No one can deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Has not every human being in the world tried

to defer or escape death? *None* have overcome it except Christ! And the older we get the more we comprehend that statement.

“...He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority... [He’s talking about the powers that work in the world. There are wicked spirits in high places: the principalities and powers.] ...and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 20-23).

I’m going to have to bring a sermon on the fullness of Christ. Fullness comes from the Greek word ‘pleroma’—also part of the scheme of philosophy and philosophical salvation through the mystery religions. I’m amazed how much this is written to refute every one of these things. It is something!

3. God’s love makes us accepted in the ‘Beloved’ One

The *Beloved One* is Christ, or ‘the Son of His love.’ We covered some of those Scriptures previously: how much Christ loved the Father and the Father loved Christ always. That’s why they did what they did for all of humankind.

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing...**” Isn’t that something? He wants to bless us with “...every spiritual blessing...” *Think* about what God wants to give us. *Think* about how much God is for us. That’s something!

“...in the heavenly *things* with Christ.” We are not in heavenly places yet. Eph. 2 tells us that’s in the ‘ages to come...’ But if we received of the Holy Spirit, which comes from God the Father in heaven above, we have received of the heavenly things.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love.” Look, if you’ve got some deep problem that’s just really bothering you, let me ask you: Does God know? *Sure He knows!* He knows every hair that you have. What do you do then? *You take it to God and ask Him to help you overcome!* That’s how you do it, because He wants you to be Holy and without blame. *Irreproachably blameless*—that’s what it means in the Greek. Another way of saying it is *without spot and without stain and without wrinkle*.

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us for sonship...” Not ‘adoption’ (*KJV*) because adoption is that *you adopt someone who is not your own flesh and blood*—your own children. We are begotten of God the Father. We are His children by begetting and will be by birth, belong to Him of His kind.

“...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the **Beloved Son**” (vs 5-6). Through Christ Jesus we are accepted. That is tremendous, brethren. I don’t know about you but that just inspires me every time I read it.

Verse 7: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself” (vs 7-9). No wonder Satan wants to destroy that knowledge, brethren. No wonder Satan wants to stamp that out, because this is so absolutely marvelous and loving and kind and good that it’s just amazing!

1-Thessalonians 3:12: “Now, may the Lord make you to exceed and to abound in love...” That’s what we want. That’s going to help, inspire, heal, and that is just going to help so many of the brethren.

“...abound in love toward one another and toward all, even as we also *abound in love* toward you, That your hearts may be established blameless in Holiness...” (vs 12-13). There it is again: *unblamable!* That’s why He imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, that you have no blame; you have no fault. Not to give you license to go sin, but to just *inspire you* to really want to love God and do what He wants.

“...in Holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (v 13). So that’s when it will be perfected in us.

4. Love covers our sins by grace and faith

That’s why the love of God is so important. I think if we understand the love of God and what He’s doing for us, and understand that so many brethren have just been beaten down and discouraged and depressed. That’s why we nickname ourselves the No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God. There’s got to be hope somewhere on this earth where you know God is there and God is love, and we need to get around all this stupidity of what we do to each other and what men do to each other. There is God.

Titus 3:3: “For we also were once... [in the time past] ...foolish...” Still am to this day in many things. Do you ever go around saying ‘Do-do’ to yourself? *Yes!* Do you ever do something stupid? *Yes!* I just did yesterday. I won’t tell you about it.

“...disobedient, deceived... [Isn’t that something—walk around deceived, don’t know a thing, just terrible.] ...serving all kinds of lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another” (v 3). My, my, my, that just tells us so much about the way that it is. Unfortunately, it’s been that way in the Church. Why has it been that way in the Church? *Because they haven’t had the love of God!*

Verse 4: “But when the graciousness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we practiced, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (vs 4-7). There it is again: *The hope of eternal life* and the *love of God* working together.

Let’s see what the Apostle Paul said of himself, how he viewed himself. You can only truly accept and understand your evil condition if you have the love of God. You can’t accept it otherwise. That’s why you can’t run up and tell the full Truth to people in the world. They can’t take it! They are deceived and their eyes are closed! That’s why in some things you can give it to them bit-by-bit, but as God’s Spirit works with you through your life, as it did with the Apostle Paul here:

1-Timothy 1:11: “According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.” This is something that needs to be for all ministers and elders. They need to know and understand that they have been committed with a trust from God. It is not a political reward. It is not something to give you authority to use and abuse, but *it is a trust*.

Verse 12: “And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy...” Why? *Because God said, ‘All right, I’m going to convert one of the enemy.’* That’s why what he writes is so profound!

“...because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with the **faith and love** that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This* is a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of

whom I am chief” (vs 14-15). That’s how he viewed his life, and the more that you are converted and the more of the love of God that you receive, the more that you understand your own human condition and sinfulness. Therefore, there won’t be any bragging and boasting of how good a person is.

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Verse 16: “But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all long-suffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life.... [that’s something] ...Now to the King of eternity, *the* incorruptible, invisible, *and* only wise God, *be* honor and glory into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 16-17). So, *love covers our sins!*

5. Love protects us

2-Thessalonians 3:3: “But the Lord is faithful, Who will establish you and keep *you* from the evil one.... [love will keep you from evil] ...Now concerning you, we trust in *the* Lord that you both practice and will be practicing the things that we command you. And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and **into the endurance of Christ**” (vs 3-5)—so that you have the same endurance as Christ does.

1-Thessalonians 4:9: “Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need *for me* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” That’s something— isn’t it? *God is going to teach us!*

What is the Holy Spirit called? And when the Holy Spirit comes, it will *teach you all things!* The Holy Spirit will teach us that we know. That’s why when you’re going about doing something and all of a sudden, have you had this happen: a thought comes and you really understand something for the first time? It’s kind of like a light comes on—*ding!* That’s the Holy Spirit teaching you. That’s the Holy Spirit connecting it. That’s the Holy Spirit working in your mind to bring you that understanding.

6. The Holy Spirit inspires us

That’s why we get excited about this, it’s the Holy Spirit that inspires us. It inspires us, it gives us strength, it gives us confidence. And again we’re going to see this with faith—*faith and love working together!*

2-Timothy 1:5: “When I remember the unfeigned faith *that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice—and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to **stir up the gift of God** that is in you by the laying on of my hands” (vs 5-6). We do have to *stir up* the Holy Spirit within us.

Yes, we do, and we can!

Verse 7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness.” That is tremendous, brethren! We don’t have to take a back seat to anybody, anywhere. We don’t need to be boastful and vain and arrogant, but because of the love of God we can have the strength of God, the faith of God, the power of God, the preaching the way it needs to be.

Verse 13: “Hold *as the* standard *for doctrine* the sound words that you heard from me, in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus.” There again *faith, love and hope* all working together, and that’s to inspire us.

7. We are to walk in love, which means as a way of life

This is the challenge. Here is a really profound Scripture. This is also a life-long project, but this is pretty profound, Ephesians 5:1 “Therefore, be imitators of God...” The Greek means *to imitate God*. Now, that’s a tall order— isn’t it? Imitate God? Remember what Jesus said? *He said that you are to become as perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect!* That can only be done with the love and Spirit of God. To imitate God! Is that not a life-long challenge? *It sure is!*

“...as beloved children... [be imitators of God] ...and walk in love... [In other words, the path in which you are walking is in love and it’s going to present a lot of challenges. I’ll guarantee you that one of the first things that’s going to happen is you’re going to have situations confront you that are unloving. That, in fact, may be downright disastrous and nasty and mean. How’s that for a challenge? So you can walk in love] ...even as Christ also loved us...” (vs 1-2).

These are some tremendous goals to aim for— aren’t they? And brethren, you know what is so wonderful, ***we can do it with Christ in us and the Holy Spirit and the love of God, we can do that!*** God would not ask us to do something we cannot do. If it’s something that we cannot do He’ll give us the strength to do it. But as human beings we always have to have these lifetime goals; that’s what He’s giving us—*lifetime goals*.

I’ll use the example of television: 54 channels and nothing on. All the channel surfing for hours brings nothing. There’s no challenge, there’s no interest. How would it be if life were like channel surfing and there was nothing on? *That’s why God gives us these goals, because they’re profound to reach out. We’re going to be the very children of God, composed of the same substance as God!* We’re going to see Him as He is. That’s a tremendous lifelong thing to keep looking to.

Verse 2: “And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” Here’s how part of it is to walk in love and walk with God and imitate God.

Verse 3: “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving. For this you know, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (vs 3-5). Just isn’t going to be. Is God not taking care of it and judging it right? This day? Today? For those very things? *Yes, He is!* May they all repent.

Verse 6: “Do not let anyone deceive you with vain words...” Don’t let someone come around with persuasive sounding arguments as if these things are really something. Be well rooted and grounded in the love of God and the Word of God and these things won’t deceive you. You’ll know and see what they are, and what the result of it’s going to be. We’re to follow God.

8. Love passes all human knowledge

The love of God passes all human knowledge. That’s why it is available to everyone that has the Holy Spirit of God. It’s not counted whether you’re educated; it’s not counted of who your parents were; *it’s counted because of God’s Spirit and God’s knowledge!*

This is how it’s going to be; this is why the love of God is so important for us, Ephesians 3:17 “That Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**; and that being rooted and grounded in love... [the very anchors of your foundation in Christ] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [full, lifetime challenge] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [greater than any education you can get in this world] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 17-19). That’s what the love of God is going to do for you.

9. The love of God perfects you

Here’s the reason for the ministry whether they be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers, Ephesians 4:12: “For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of the ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith...” (vs 12-13). What is it that brings the unity of the faith? *It’s the Spirit of God!* Not a name, not an association, not even doctrine, but *the Spirit of God; the love of God*. You can have

some doctrine but not have the love of God. Have we all experienced that? Did that produce unity? *No, it produced disunity—didn’t it? Yes!*

“...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ... [That’s what love is going to do for us] ...So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men... [Does that sound like some of your experience in the Church recently?] ...in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error” (vs 13-14). They’ve systematized the error. It’s called in the parlance of theology ‘systematic theology.’

Verse 15: “But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part...” (vs 15-16). Everyone in the body of Christ has something that he or she can do—*everyone!*

And that’s how the Christian Biblical Church of God has grown, brethren, because the brethren love the brethren and they’re out there helping them. I try and do what I can, but I can do nothing without what God gives me to do and without what God gives the brethren to do because it’s every joint supplies. I’m sure there are other people in other churches trying to do what they can do. May we all, with God’s Spirit, *come to the unity of the faith* in the time that God wants us to.

“...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” (v 16). *Perfects the saints!*

10. Now love helps us overcome

With all of this, it’s *overcoming with understanding*. I’ll tell you, the best way to get hindsight real quickly is when you have a problem, repent of it as quickly as you can, then God will give you hindsight to understand it. *He will!*

Romans 8:28: “And **we know**... [this takes time; this takes experience; this takes living] ...that all things work together for good... [Sometimes they don’t look like they are. I know, I’ve seen a lot of things and I could not figure out how on earth this is going to work for good, but in the final analysis it will.] ...to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” They’ll all work out. If you love God go to Him, ask for His help, ask for His Spirit. It will work out. *Yes, it will!* Love is going to help us to overcome everything.

Verse 35: “[Who] What shall separate us

from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation... [We've all had our difficulties and trials—haven't we?] ...or distress... [Have you been under stress lately? *Yes!*] ...or persecution... [I don't think any of us have really, really been persecuted, I mean truly.] ...or famine... [none of us are hungry; we have no scarceness of bread] ...or nakedness..."

We can go home, throw open the closet and there's so much there you don't know what to do with it. There are times that Dolores will buy something and she won't wear it for a while, and then she'll put it on and I'll say, 'Oh that's new.' And she'll say, 'No, I've had this for x amount of time. And I'll say, 'Well, I haven't seen it. When have you worn this?' And once in a while I'll get it out of her that even though she's had it all this time this is the first time she's worn it. Other times I just miss the boat entirely. Stupid men never pay attention; you know how that is. We're not naked. I know you don't have as many shoes as Imelda Marcos, but you probably have so many in your closet they get in the way—right?

"...or danger, or sword? Accordingly, it is written, 'For Your sake we are killed all the day long... [Listen, believe me, there isn't any of us going to be a martyr unless we love God more than our own lives, more than anything else.] ...we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter.' But in all these things we are more than conquerors [overcomers] through Him Who loved us. For I am **persuaded**... [We'll have to make sure we understand what that is: persuaded or convinced, either one] ...that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 35-39). That's how we overcome, brethren. That's something— isn't it?

Many times we've had the cart but we haven't had the horse. We haven't understood it and we've told everybody to get their carts out there and get them straightened up and make sure they go. You find out it doesn't work because ***you have to have love first***. It'll work.

It's the same way within the Church. How is the Church going to run? How's the Church going to be effective? What is the most inspiring and uplifting thing that can be with church? Now, *church* I mean when we come together and we assemble together. God wants it to be centered on Christ and Him that it is going to be a wonderful and a joyous experience for all of us. That's why in our experience we've all had to come to ground zero and build again on the foundation of Christ so that we really understand and get the true perspective.

Colossians 2:1: "Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love... [That's how it needs to be: ***knit together***. What do you do when you knit? *You work*—right? *You plan*—right? *You have a pattern*—correct? ***You knit!*** God does that for us; our hearts are knit together in love] ...unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs 1-3). Then he goes on to say don't let any man deceive you with enticing words.

This is how a church needs to be run. That's why we need to shed all the baggage from the past, put it all aside, retain all of that which is good. We need to do that. That doesn't mean throw away what we really understand, but all the baggage.

Philippians 1:27: "Only conduct yourselves worthily of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent..." What is he saying? '*This is for mature responsibility. You are responsible.*'

In this age I have never seen anything like it. I mean it is something else! No one is responsible for his actions! It's either him or her, or the bureaucracy, the law or the policeman, or my friend, or my aunt or uncle, or someone oppressed me when I was a kid. My father shouted at me before I was born and I was born with a complex. I'm not responsible.' *Stupidity!* That's not the way it should be. He's saying be constant in Christ all the time.

"...so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the reports about you; that you are standing fast in one spirit, striving together with one soul for the faith of the Gospel... [Again, we have faith preceding love—don't we?] ...and not being intimidated in any way by those who oppose *the Gospel*; which to them is a demonstration of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His name's sake" (vs 27-29).

That's what the whole Church of God is going through right now to suffer for His sake because they have been deficient and neglecting, in fact in some cases, even disdainful of the love and grace of God. God is not going to tolerate that because the whole Gospel is based on the grace and love of God.

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.” Mercies and compassion from the very innermost part of your being. Not just something, you know, ‘Hi, how are you?. Oh, it’s wonderful to see you,’ and in your mind you think, ‘I just wish they’d get away from here, I hate that person.’ No, none of that kind of stuff.

Verse 2: “Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [This is what Christ wants us to have: **the mind of Christ!**] ...having the same love, being joined together in soul, **minding the one thing**”—which is the Kingdom of God and the calling of God. That’s what that means.

Verse 3: “*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus” (vs 3-5). Then he emphasizes, after he tells about Christ and what He did. He also emphasizes something concerning our own responsibility.

Verse 12: “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both **to will and to do** according to *His* good pleasure.... [*to have the desire*; God is working it in you ...Do all things without complaints and disputes” (vs 12-14).

We’re going to cover a couple of Scriptures, which have been so misapplied. Have you ever heard this: ‘if you’re loving your neighbor you have fulfilled the Law and you don’t need to keep the Sabbath or Holy Days or any of those other things.’ Does that sound a little familiar to you from Protestant theology? Let’s look at a couple of these verses now and let’s understand them, because they throw this out just sort of just like a wet, cold fish out on the table: ‘Now what do you have to say about that?’

Galatians 5:13: “For you have been called unto freedom, brethren; only do not *use* this freedom for an occasion to the flesh; rather, serve one another with love. For the whole law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vs 13-14). So therefore, if you do that you have nothing else that you have to do. That’s the conclusion. That is **not correct**. This means: *For all the law is summarized, or the full expression behind the law is summarized, in one word or one saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”*

Is it talking about any of the commandments toward God? *No!* It’s talking about neighbor-to-neighbor, brother-to-brother. It is not discussing the

laws toward God. Is it discussing idolatry? *No!* Is it discussing taking the name of God in vain? *No!* Is it discussing having other gods before you? *No!* It’s talking about love to neighbor.

Verse 15: “But if you bite and devour one another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another.” He’s saying, ‘Now look, this is the way that you’re going to overcome the difficulties between each other. It has nothing to do with the commandments toward God.’ That’s handled in other places. So, don’t ever let them come and throw that old wet fish on the table and say, ‘That’s all we have to do.’ It doesn’t mean that at all. You have to read all the verses.

Verse 16: “Now *this* I say, walk by *the* Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Here’s another one they turn to, Romans 13 and they say, ‘See, see, it doesn’t say the Sabbath, therefore, you don’t have to keep it.’ *Not true!* It’s not talking about the Sabbath.

Romans 13:8: “Do not be indebted to anyone for anything... [Oh, that would be so nice—wouldn’t it?] ...unless *it is* to love one another. For **the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law.**” Tie in ‘What is the first and great commandment? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your mind, all your soul, and all your being’ (Matt. 22:37-41). So, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Now then when it comes to neighbors is what he’s talking about here correct? Verse 9: “Because *it says*, ‘You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder....’” Now, it doesn’t say honor your father and mother—does it? So therefore, no children have to honor their father and mother—correct? Because it doesn’t say it here—right? **Learn to take their logic and turn it right back on them and make them eat it!** Of course that’s a stupid statement. It’s meant to be with your neighbor; love your neighbor as yourself.

“...‘You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not lust.’ **And if there be any other commandment**, it is summed up in this saying, *even* by this *standard*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not do any wrong to *its* neighbor; therefore, love *is* the full expression of *God’s* Law” (vs 9-10).

In other words it is the highest attainment and fulfillment of the Law—because the Law was designed to bring you to the love of God—that you would think of the things for your neighbor that you would do for your neighbor because you love God and love your neighbor. So therefore, these

Scriptures have nothing whatsoever to do with the first five commandments—do they? Remember, it doesn't say honor father and mother.

There's some that have to do with family relations, which are also very important. I want you to understand something very important concerning the Bible: It is not a marriage counseling, psychological textbook. As a matter of fact there are very few places in here which really talk about marriage—are there not? *Yes!* Why is that? *Because if you have the love of God things are going to work so much better in your marriage—correct? Yes! Yes, they will!*

Ephesians 5:20: “Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God” (vs 20-21). My wife has talked to me about a lot of things a lot of the time. And if it's correct and true that's fine. It doesn't mean you're letting women rule, but you love and understand each other and that's the way it needs to be.

Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” This is what needs to be in a marriage. No marriage is going to be successful where there are partners. It won't work! Man is the head. God made it that way by creation and it cannot be changed. When it's topsy-turvy and upside down, does it work? *It may for a while!* What has to happen? *Well, the husband has to become Mr. Wimble Softnoodle and run and hide in a corner!*

Then his wife is mad because ‘You are a spineless creature.’ *Well, you've driven me to it.* You can't change what God has set up. It won't work. You are to submit unto your husbands as unto the Lord. Are we all to submit to Christ? *Yes, without a doubt!*

Verse 23: “For the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the body. For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives...” (vs 23-25).

I'll guarantee that each one of us—husbands and wives—are going to make that a challenging thing. Every one of us has something that grates the other one the wrong way. If you don't, thank God, praise God, work together, don't let anything happen that way because all human nature is the same. This is the way that God has said we should get it straightened out: love your wives even when they're snitty; even when they do things that you know they shouldn't; even when they provoke you. That's a hard one. Next time your wife really provokes you

into something see if you can still have that love. You try it! That's a challenge! Didn't I say that love is a lifelong challenge? There's one of them—your wife.

“...in the same way that Christ also loved the Church and **gave Himself for it**... [Whew! How far do we have to go in this? *To the nth degree*—do we not? *Yes!*] ...So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word; That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies....” (vs 25-28).

Isn't it true that all of you women and all of you wives will say, ‘Aren't men cowards when they get sick?’ *Yes!* Well, that's Scriptural. Yes, we are! And I know all of you who have had children say, ‘Well, you've never had to bear children.’ *Yes!* Try that, that's painful. Yeah, when we get sick we like to take care of ourselves and baby ourselves and all this sort of thing.

“...husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body...” (vs 28-30).

This is a profound verse here, brethren—and the first time I read that I could not understand it because are we not to be in the Kingdom of God spiritually? *Yes!* So then, why does it say this?:

Verse 30: “For we are members of His body—**of His flesh and of His bones.**” What does that mean? Well, I think it means this: *of His flesh* through the crucifixion; and *of His bones* the same way that the bone was taken from the rib of Adam to make Eve that the Church is formed from the innermost part of Christ. That's why it's “...**of His flesh and of His bones.**” Bones through the very crucifixion—*He died for us!* He's talking about not loving your life unto death.

Verse 31: “For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let each one of you love his wife even as himself; and *let each* wife see that she reverence *her* husband” (vs 31-33). 1-Pet. 3 says that a meek and a quiet spirit is of a great price.

Now then, he talks a little bit about family relations, Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in *the* Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and *your* mother, which is the first

commandment with a promise” (vs 1-2).

That’s why the public schools, the first thing they do is: ‘Don’t obey your parents. Obey your social worker. Don’t honor your father and your mother, you honor this socialist system that we have.’ What is the result of it? *Murder is the #1 killer of teenagers! Auto wrecks are #2, suicide is #3.* I’ll have to admit that in today’s world, all who are parents, you’ve got a great challenge. And that’s why a lot of the parents that I know of have gone to home schooling. They’ve just had it up to way over their head with this school system.

You cannot combat or turn back eight hours of teaching at school with an hour at home after school and an hour at home before they go to school, plus their own carnal nature and human nature mixed in it with the music and entertainment and all of that. ***It is tough!*** I understand that, but we have to do the best we can under the circumstances if we can. Let your children know that, and let them know that they’re responsible; ultimately, it is true, their own free choice they’re going to have to exercise. And ultimately, it is true that God is going to judge them for what they do. If we can reach out and help some of the children that way then that will be fine.

Verse 3: “That it may be well with you, and *that* you may live long on the earth. And fathers, do not provoke your children; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of *the* Lord” (vs 3-4). I will have to say to children: Do not provoke your parents to wrath either. We can add that as a subsidiary commandment because a lot of them do. It’s in human nature to see how much you can get away with. Why don’t you turn human nature around and see how much you can do; to do what is right and be responsible; not how much you can get away with so that you can provoke people or do whatever you want to.

There’s one other thing that love will do, and I saved this for last because it has to do with correction. None of us like correction. None of us like difficulties. Let me just mention here very quickly:

- The easiest way to receive correction is to ***love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being so He can reveal to you your faults*** so you can repent.
- The next easiest way is in ***studying God’s Word***; you take it to heart and you change.
- The next easiest way, and becomes more difficult, ***is someone to tell you.***
- Then the most difficult way is to ***let the circumstances and other people correct you.***
- ***That is tough!***

Hebrews 12:5: “And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him.’”

- listen
- learn
- pay attention
- don’t give up and faint

Verse 6: “For whom *the* Lord loves He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as *a Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*? For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them...” (vs 5-10). Lots of times we thought it wasn’t fair. ***Fair*** is a communist idea. ***Justice comes from God!***

“...but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness. Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards... [Great! 100% hindsight!] ...it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it” (vs 10-11).

So, the love of God does all of these things for us ***so that we can be the very children of God. That’s why love is the greatest!***

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

Scripture References:

- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11
- 2) Matthew 24:12
- 3) Romans 1:17
- 4) Galatians 5:6
- 5) Hebrews 11:1
- 6) 1 Thessalonians 1:3
- 7) Romans 4:21-25
- 8) Romans 5:1-6
- 9) John 3:16
- 10) Romans 5:7-11
- 11) 1 Corinthians 2:9-10
- 12) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3
- 13) Colossians 1:8-10
- 14) Ephesians 1:15-23; 3-9
- 15) 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
- 16) Titus 3:3-7
- 17) 1 Timothy 1:11-17
- 18) 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
- 19) 1 Thessalonians 4:9

- 20) 2 Timothy 1:5-7, 13
- 21) Ephesians 5:1-6
- 22) Ephesians 3:17-19
- 23) Ephesians 4:12-16
- 24) Romans 8:28, 35-39
- 25) Colossians 2:1-3
- 26) Philippians 1:27-29
- 27) Philippians 2:1-5, 12-14
- 28) Galatians 5:13-16
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- 30) Ephesians 5:20-33
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