

# Love One Another

Fred R. Coulter—July 7, 2001

In my travels this year, I've seen people come out of all kinds of Churches of God. I've seen people with their difficulties and their problems and their ups and downs and trials and things that they go through. And let's just understand something very important, here. You're going to have troubles in your life—people are going to have trouble in their lives whether they are in the Church or not. Did you have troubles and difficulties before you came into the Church of God? *Yes!* But, you have one great advantage being in the Church of God: ***You have God with you and you have the Word of God*** and God shows you the right and the proper way.

In the world, we like to solve problems and problem solvers are promoted. But many times when you solve a problem or you look at a difficulty and you try and correct it, what you're doing, you're correcting the *effect* and God wants us to learn how to correct the *cause*, and to replace the *cause* with the right and the proper things. And, of course, God calling us is the most important thing that we need to understand. God has given us a guaranteed way ***that will never fail***.

Do you understand that? Not that you're going to eliminate difficulties and problems; you're going to encounter them all the time. That's just the nature of life. But, it's what you do with it, and how you do it; and remember this, in all your troubles and difficulties, with the Spirit of God in you, Christ is in you, Christ is there with you.

As you suffer He suffers. But, He gives a guaranteed way. Let's see the guaranteed way:

- God is eternal
- God is righteous
- God is true

He ***gives*** us the way so that we understand that by using this and building on this foundation, we can never fail and we'll attain to eternal life.

1-Corinthians 13:8: ***"Love never fails."*** That's what we need to focus on. All the other things are going to fail, be in part. Then he says, v 13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love."

Let's start out with what we need to do first. This is the most important thing, and this is where it needs to be. What we're going to talk about is something that you do not have naturally. So, what we're talking about is going to be a gift, which comes from God through the power of His Holy Spirit. Since we have human nature to overcome, we

are going to have our ups and downs in learning this. I'm still learning myself, brethren. We're all learning, and everyday presents us with an opportunity to learn and to apply this.

Of course, the Pharisees who always wanted to know which is a direct commandment so they came to Jesus and said, Mark 12:28: "And one of the scribes who had come up *to Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is *the* first commandment of all?' Then Jesus answered him, '*The* first of all the commandments *is*, "Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."*"...."* (vs 28-30).

Since this is the ***greatest***, therefore this cannot be preached enough. Because, we're always going to have where the troubles come from and why we need the love of God, and why the love of God keeps us in the right focus in what we need to do. That's why that is first. It is to be absolutely indivisible, it is to be absolutely ***all***. The reason is that God, in His plan, is going to give you the greatest things.

"... all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is the* first commandment. And *the* second *is* like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'...." (vs 30-31). We're going to see there are four aspects of love. Here are the first two:

1. ***Love God***
2. ***Love your neighbor***

Your neighbor can be anyone.

"...There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master. You have spoken according to Truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices'" (vs 31-33).

It's more than all the religious effort that you can make and this man understood it! We'll have to hold in abeyance, did he learn it? Become a true follower of Christ? As a true Christian? *We don't know, we're not told!* But now this is what Jesus said:

Verse 34: “And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’” What is this telling us? *How the Kingdom of God is going to operate*—doesn’t it?

Everybody’s so interested in getting practice for the Kingdom of God, so they are qualified. We even have some women rising up as preachers, because ‘how are they doing to be able to teach in the Kingdom of God unless they teach now’? *Very simple—learn the love of God and you will know!* When you’re a resurrected spirit being, you will have no problem teaching and you will have the authority at that time to teach. Not all men teach, either, so it applies the same way.

God does things differently than people look at things. That’s why we’re here and the world is not here. God is the One Who does the choosing and calling. The scribes and Pharisees didn’t like what He was doing, Matthew 9:10 “Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.”

What I want you to do is, I want you to think of a local restaurant/bar and picture this; kind of like it’s happening in Hollister today. They’ve got all the motorcyclists there. And I imagine many people raise their eyebrows and turn down their nose when they see all of these motorcyclists. There’s one little restaurant/bar in Hollister, it’s called Johnny’s Bar. They make the greatest hamburgers. Delores and I go there and we get a hamburger there from time-to-time, and it’s really good! So, just picture Christ and the disciples in Johnny’s Bar with all the motorcycles out front. And a religious leader walks down and says, “‘Boy, how can this guy be from God? Look, he’s in Johnny’s Bar, and we know that is a dive—don’t we?’”

Verse 11: “And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples... [here is the unsaid thing: ‘If your Master is from God’] ...Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?.... [They’ll be contaminated!] ...But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and learn what this means...’” (vs 11-13). We have to learn what that means, too. I think those who have been in other churches in the world and other Churches of God, you need to go and learn what that means in relationship to each other.

“...‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but **sinners to repentance**.” (v 13). That’s what we are. All the people in the Church of God are sinners. Understand that? *We’re all sinners!* We’re trying not to be sinners in overcoming and using the Holy Spirit of

God. But how many times do we fall short because we still have ‘the law of sin and death’ in us? *Well, many, many, many times!*

### 3. Love your *enemies*

Let’s look at a love that is even more difficult than this. Here’s the third kind of love. This is the **hardest** one indeed!

Matthew 5:43: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” Almost everywhere I go, as I checked out of the motel this morning the gal there said, ‘Have a great day!’ and I said, ‘Thanks, I need one.’ No one has wished me an awful day. Have you ever gone into a store to get something and clerk says, ‘Thank you, have a miserable day! May your life be just filled with trouble and difficulty.’ So, occasionally, I answer back and say, ‘Why thank you, I need a good day, but perhaps maybe my enemies need a miserable day.’

But, that’s not true. What is God interested in, even with the enemy? I’m not talking about ourselves, here, in this case. God is interested in that the enemy *repent*. Did you know that’s why He called Saul, who became Paul? Some of the brethren still weren’t willing to accept it. Especially if he killed one of your sons or your daughters. Or ran your family off to prison. That’s a hard pill to swallow—*isn’t it? Yes!*

Notice what Jesus said, v 44: “But I say to you, love your enemies... [That’s hard! How do you love your enemies? You do no harm to them, because even your enemy is still your neighbor.] ...bless those who curse you... [that’s difficult—*isn’t it?* Even from a point of view of total conversion, that’s difficult] ...do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

That’s a tall order—*isn’t it?* What I want you to do is I want you to think about this in relationship to your past church experiences—whatever they may be. Because just about everyone who comes—finally is able to fellowship with us—have come from some church, either a church in the world or a Church of God, and a lot have gone through a lot of difficulties and problems and things and they need to be healed. In being healed, you can’t be healed unless you understand this.

Doctrinal problems, that’s another thing. Heresy is another thing. One of the ways that you love your enemy is to expose the truth. State what the truth is. That doesn’t mean because you love them that you give into them. Did Jesus state the truth when He was being tried and later crucified? What did He say? ‘Father, forgive them for they do not what they do.’

- Did Stephen speak the truth? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he love them? *Yes!*
- Did he warn them? *Yes!*
- Did they love him? *No!*
- Did they kill him? *Yes!*
- Did he say, “God, Lord, don’t lay this to their charge”? *Yes!*

*That’s how it’s done!*

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven...” In other words, if you’re going around acting carnally, are you really the children of your Father in heaven? or You probably are, no doubt about that, but your carnality is hanging out.

- Have there been times when my carnality hangs out? *Yes!*
- Have there been times when the whole church sat down with me and said, ‘Fred, we want you to listen to us’? *Yes!*
- Have I learned from that? *Yes!*
- Has it been beneficial to me? *Yes!*
- Has it been beneficial to you? *Yes!*

That’s all part of love—need to understand that. Unless we get to thinking because God has called us and He has chosen us that we are special to Him, lest we forget, the more we have come and what our nature really is, let’s understand this:

“...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good...” (v 45). When you stand out there, enjoy a beautiful sunrise or beautiful sunset and everything is just fine and lovely, and you feel real good, and you say, ‘God thank you for this’—remember, it still rose and set on the evil.

“...and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (vs 45-46). We’ll talk about love of brother here in just a minute. But what he’s saying here is this: If you end up having the kind of carnal love that is in the world—for their clubs, for their societies, for the acceptance of the people that belong to them, my team, my club, my town, and so forth—and you avoid and shun others, what have we done any better than the world? *Nothing!* Absolutely nothing at all whatsoever!

Verse 47: “And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary?...” What if you don’t even salute your brethren? Where are you? I see that in my travels where I go. There have been a lot of people who have been at each other’s throats for one reason or another, and you’re not going to solve it by going after the problem and say, ‘This is the problem.’ ***We need to go to the solution and ask God for love!*** That’s what needs to be.

Maybe you’ll get a whole different perspective. I know I have! Every time I get angry and upset at something, or I think someone has, then I go pray and ask God to help me to really understand, give me His love and help me to ***love*** that person. Then I see where I’ve fallen short. Then I find out that some of the things that I have assumed have been just that, assumptions, not truth.

Since this is not natural and it has to come from God, we should ask for it everyday. I do! Let’s understand something here: True humility does not come because you make yourself humble by being a sycophant. ***True humility comes from God*** when you understand the greatness of God and the greatness of His love, and the greatness of His calling—then you’re humble, and that you understand ***you have absolutely nothing you didn’t receive!*** Everything has come from God—all that which is physical and all that which is spiritual.

And you can always do a reality check. What is a reality check? *Well, you either sit up real straight or stand up real straight, and you put your hand right down here and you find your belly-button*, and when you find it, you know you came from your mom and dad. ***You have nothing that you didn’t receive!*** That way then, you’re not going to be all uppity-uppity and, you’re going to have a little more patience and understanding. But the thing is, because we’re carnal and human, it’ll go for a little while and then something will change—so you got to come back to the reality.

Now here is the reason for the whole thing, v 48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” ***And that is the goal!*** If Christ is *in* you, and God the Father imputes the righteousness of Christ to you and you love God and you love your neighbor and you love your enemies, then you ***are*** imputed *perfect*. Do you understand that? All the while realizing your imperfections? God works the opposite way. When you realize your imperfections, you realize that *you need the love of God*. To realize it, you need to express the love of God and that that has to come from God. Then you are becoming *perfected* through the operation of God’s Spirit. God does things the opposite way that human beings do, and we’ll see that as we go along.

Matthew 7:7: “Ask, and it shall be given to you...” Most people ask for physical things. That’s not necessarily what you need to ask for. You should ask: ‘Give us this day our daily bread’—correct? But what do you need more of? ***The love of God!*** the Greek here means *ask, keep on asking and it shall be given you*. That is something you have to exercise and is something that you have to use.

Go and look at the trial that Abraham went through, and finally when he offered his son, remember what the angel said the second time? He said, 'Now **I know** that you fear Me! Because you have withheld your son, your only son, from Me.' Everything that we are going through is so that God can give us His character, so that we can come to the same point that Abraham was; that God **now knows!** That took quite a few years for him to accomplish—didn't it? *Yes!* So, likewise with us, it will take some years.

"...Seek, and you shall find..." (v 7). You have to ask and you have to seek: You have *ask* for the love of God, you have to *seek* the love of God, and you have to *apply* the love of God.

"...Knock and it shall be opened to you" (v 7). That's whatever circumstances you may need or want or whatever it may be—God **will work it out His way** and it will be best in the long run. But, while you're going through the trial, sometimes it's difficult to see the end, because you haven't arrived at the end, yet. When you have finished the trial and there's some space in time and you have time to think about it and you look back, you have perfect 20/20 vision that God was right all along.

Verse 8: "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for* bread, will give him a stone? And if he shall ask *for* a fish, will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil..." (vs 8-11).

I want you understand. He's saying, 'If you then, having an evil nature'—this is what it is talking about. Notice what that applies to, because that has followed shortly after what we read in Matt. 5 about loving your enemies. 'That you may be perfect.'

He now says, v 11: "Therefore, if you, being evil know *how* to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who *is* in heaven give good things to those who ask Him? Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets" (vs 11-12).

#### 4. Love one another

The fourth kind is the most important kind of love for us who are in the Church of God. This is something that comes with:

- great difficulty
- great effort
- prayer
- study
- time
- experience.

John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another..." How are we to do this? "...love one another..."

After we've been scattered and beaten up and have gone through so many experiences, you know, brethren, it's nice when we love each other. That we can walk into the congregation and we can realize that these people love me, they love God. But, you know, you have to express it, too. Sometimes, it's kind of like the cranky old man. The cranky old man most of the time, when you get to know him, turns out to be more kind than you would ever imagine. But, you've got to get past the crankiness.

I never will forget when I was suffering with my hip, before I had the operation. I was in such pain, I was walking down the hall—and those of you who have been in our house, we have long hall downstairs—and I was just grimacing with pain. And, Rachele was coming this way and I was walking down the hall, and she'd just seen the movie, *Grumpy Old Men*. So, she came and said, 'Hi, dad, how are you?' I just sort of grunted! You know, because I was in such pain. She says, 'Dad, you are the *two* grumpy old men!' I've never forgotten that!

I just use that as an example that you can misinterpret people so easily. Being close together, we can misinterpret each other very easily! If we've gone through the mill and if we've had our feelings hurt, and if we've had people 'dump on you'—what does that mean? That's like you're standing here and all of a sudden the dump truck comes up and dumps a whole load of sand right on you. Sometimes people will do that to you; come and just 'dump' on you. And you say, 'I didn't deserve that!' You know, you're very sensitive. *Yes!*

I tell you, some of these wounds are hard to heal. Some of the things that we go through are very difficult; some of the things that we do stay with us a long, long time; some things that people do to us also stay with us a long, long time. That's why the daily prayer is, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others who trespass against us.'

Here's love: "...in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another" (v 34). That's a great challenge with all the doctrinal wars and church wars that we have gone through; and religious wars in the world.

I just talked to a man the other day who had to work for a Hindu and every Friday the Hindu would ask him: 'Well, what are you doing tomorrow?' He said, 'Well, you know, it's my Sabbath.' Of course, he knew he was a Christian, and so forth, and, one day the Hindu said, 'Well, I

have no respect for Christians, I have no respect for Christ.' And we have some people in India that we send things to, and he just e-mailed us back and said that this is a godless, antichrist society.

Brethren, while we have freedom and things like this, we need to concentrate on loving God and loving each other. I mean, think about that! We have freedom of assembly, we have freedom of speech—they don't have it. ***God has given it to us so that we may do His will!***

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." How do you get the words of Christ ***in*** you? ***By study, through the Spirit of God!*** If they're living ***in*** you, then that's how you are living ***by***. This is the thing that motivates you.

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples" (vs 7-8). {put in there, Gal. 5:22-23, which is the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering and so forth.

Verse 9: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love." That means: on a continuous basis remain in the love of Christ. And remember, we are to love each other as Christ has loved us.

- With Christ in you—has He put up with a lot of your carnality? ***Yes!***
- Does He still love you? ***Yes!***
- Has He cast you off? ***No!***
- Does He bring it to your attention that you are carnal and miserable? ***Yes!***
- So that you may what? ***Repent!***

That's what God has called us to. That's why we have the nickname The No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God; because we're tired of all the hassle and the stupidity that comes along with religion and churches and the church wars that have gone on.

So, what we have to do is each one of us resolve to stop it! We're not going to instill the love of God by being nit-picky, that won't happen. You instill the love of God by desiring it and seeking for it and asking for it and growing in it and practicing it. And in your practicing of the love of God then you have failures that come along so you're going to learn a lesson. If you've been fighting with your husband or your wife and you're mad and you're angry and you're carnal—well, stop it! Ask God to help you have the love of God and ask God to help you love your husband or love your wife in the same way that Christ loves you—and you will see that ***that will work!***

I have never, *never*, ***never*** yet seen an argument that has been won by debate! You may get

your point across, **but have you generated love?** Sometimes there's correction that comes. That's another story, we'll talk about that.

"...live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: **that you love one another, as I have loved you...** [How great was this?] ...**No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends**" (vs 10-13). That's what it's all about, brethren, and we need to get right to that—we need to understand that.

Let's look and see where the trouble comes from, 'cause we're going to beset with a lot of troubles and difficulties. We live in this age! This age is offensive.

Matthew 24. 10: "And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another; And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold" (vs 10-12).

So, we've got the offenses of the world—don't we? You think people are not easily offended? Try cutting in close to someone on the freeway. You better have a very fast car, because of the road-rage that people have today. Are people offended because you speak the Truth? ***Yes!*** We're living in a society that's easily offended. Do we become easily offended? ***If we're not concentrating on the love of God, it's very easy to become easily offended!*** Do you still have temper and anger? ***Yes, you do—I do!*** Do you get mad and make caustic remarks when you're driving along? 'Did you see what that person did?' We're just talking about driving. We're not talking about anything else. Try husband wife relationships! Try child-rearing! ***Easily offended!***

So, there are troubles that come from the world. We have to learn how to handle that. There are also troubles, which arise in the Church that need to be taken care of. This became a whole Church problem that hadn't learned very much in the love of God at this particular point, because it takes time. There were still very nationalistic Jews and Gentiles, Jews and Greeks. Some were looking for *equal time*, equal opportunity as they would say today.

Acts 6:1: "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint... [Complaining! We never have that among ourselves—do we? *Of course, we do!* Can be individuals or it can be a thing that takes place.] ...a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews... ['Oh, yeah, we know, you Jews always think that you just gotta be on top of everything. 'Christ has

called us'] ...because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." What's going on!' That's what was happening!

Verse 2: "And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, 'It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word'" (vs 2-4). What they did, they selected seven men—all Greeks—to wait on the Greek widows. This thing was a problem in the Church all the way down, just like circumcision wars.

There are going to be doctrinal problems, too. We have problems in the world; we have problems within the Church. Why do we have problems in the Church? *Because we still have our carnal nature that we're carrying around with us—right? Why do we have problems in the Church? Because we carrying them from wherever we came before!* Either from the world, because we're in the process of overcoming, since we've been baptized; or from another church, because you have come out of that church, and as was said years ago, 'You can get the people out of Worldwide, but you can't get Worldwide out of the people.' Or whatever Church of God or whatever denomination you have come from. So, we'll have those problems.

Now let's look at some doctrinal problems which will come here.

(go to the next track)

Let's come to 2-John and let's see that there will be even church difficulties, which will be **very difficult!** I want you to understand how they're going to be **solved**. They're solved with **truth** and **love**—that's how they're solved.

2-John 1: "The elder to *the* chosen lady and her children, **whom I love in Truth**, and not I alone, but also all those who have **known the Truth**... [If you **know the Truth** and have the love of God then you're going to have to apply it and use it.] ...For the sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, **in Truth and love**" (vs 1-3). I want you to just emphasized that as we go through. We've had *Truth* four times in three verses, now, five times:

Verse 4: "...I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are **walking in Truth**, exactly as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech you, lady..." (vs 4-5). This is written to the Church, so this is an overall teaching to the Church as to

what to do when there are deep problems within the Church.

- Have there been deep problems within the Church? *Yes!*
- Have there been deep problems within Protestantism? *Yes!*
- Catholicism? *Yes!*

This tells us what we need to do, v 5: "And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed* from *the* beginning, that we **love one another**." When troubles are all around, on every side, if we be like the Galatians, and if we backbite and devour one another, what's going to happen? Can't be having that, brethren!

Verse 6: "And this is the love *of* God: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the* beginning, that you might walk in it Because many deceivers have entered into the world [and into the Church], those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh..." (vs 6-7). That's happening right now in the Presbyterian Church. Not only did they approve of the ordination of homosexuals, BUT they're questioning the very nature of salvation through Christ and that there are religions which lead to salvation, too!

"...This is *the spirit* of the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out for yourselves... [that is, be on guard to yourselves] ...order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished..." (vs 7-8). Living in the Laodicean age:

- Is it easy to lose the things that you have worked? *Yes!*
- Is it easy to lose the love of God if you neglect it? *Yes!*
- Is it easy to forget about prayer and study because you're **so busy**?

If you don't have time to pray; and you don't have time to study; and you always make an excuse to God, then think about this for a minute: What if in very dire needs, you get on your knees and you pray to God and ask God to intervene and help you.

- What if God sent you the same message that you send to God many times?—'I don't have time.'
- What if God said to you, 'I don't have time'?

You need to think about that! Don't lose the things that you have already done:

"...but *that* we may receive a full reward. Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ **does not have God**... [the teachings of Christ] ...*But* the one who continues in

the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.... [When we come to *extreme* cases, the way we *love* our enemy is to have him leave us.] ...If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not say to him, 'Welcome!' For anyone who says, 'Welcome!' to him is partaking in his evil works" (vs 8-11). Now, he was living in a time, which was very difficult.

Verse 12: "I have many things to write, but I do not wish to *convey these things to you* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face in order that our joy may be *completely* full." Couldn't even write it!

Some of the people that we serve in some of these foreign countries, we have to make sure that we send it in a small package. We have to make sure that the address is the address of an *individual* and not a church, because they will take it, they will confiscate it. We've also learned that those who need a little help financially, that we never send the money directly, we send it bank-to-bank so that we keep everything honest. There have been a lot of 'rip-off' artists out there in these other countries. I don't think, brethren, we fully understand or appreciate what it's like to live in some of these, these countries. It's something!

So, we have those doctrinal things; now let's come back to John 15. Here are some other problems that we'll be confronted with. This is why it's so important that we 'love one another.'

John 15:17: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you... [That's also another problem we're going to be confronted with—right?] ...you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this" (vs 17-19).

That's another problem we're going to be facing. I'm talking with some people who have lost their jobs because of religious discrimination. and also age, age discrimination. Most corporations, if you're getting close to 50, want you out. They can't say, 'You're getting close to 50 so we want you out.' They can't say, 'We hate your religion, we want you out.' They legally create a dossier of trumped up charges and have that on file. Then comes the time to let you loose and they've got it documented and they have illegally used the law to get rid of you—and the stated reason for getting rid of you is not the one that's in the file, but really because of what you believe in God (i.e. what they look at as your religion) or your age!

"...the world hates you for this. Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also..." (vs 19-20). Think of it, brethren, why should we persecute one another within the Church of God? *Love one another!* That doesn't mean that we have to agree with false doctrines. *No!* That has nothing to do with false doctrines.

"...If they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also. But they will do all these things to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have nothing... [that is an excuse] ...to cover their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without *a* cause.' But when the Comforter has come, the Spirit of Truth" (vs 20-26)—and *it* will guide you and comfort you..

John 16:1: "I have spoken these things to you so that you will not be offended.... [We already covered there are a lot of offenses out there in the world, but *we* should not be offended.] ...They shall cast you out of the synagogues... [They sure did back then—didn't they? The day is coming, they're going to put us out of where we meet—no doubt about it.] ...furthermore, the time is coming that everyone who kills you will think that he is rendering service to God" (vs 1-2). Those things are just ahead of us. That's why we need to love each other.

Let's see another area where we're going to have troubles. We've got the problems in the world. We have problems within the Church. We had doctrinal problems. All those things come along—don't they? Who is behind all of it? *Satan the devil!* We are living this age of the greatest deception. The deception is so great that people don't even know they're deceived. How's that for a deception? Huh? *That is slick!*

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down...' (vs 9-10).

There's Satan who's 'the prince of the power of the air' accusing us before God's Throne

all the time. That's what was the difficulty that happened in Galatia. They were backbiting and devouring one another and doing Satan's work for him! Can that happen because of carnal nature in a human? *Yes!*

- That's why you need to come back to the love of God.
- That's why you need to ask for the love of God.
- That's why you need to grow in it.
- That's why you're going to have trials and difficulties so you can learn how to apply it.

But, brethren, we need to love each other. He accuses us:

"...who accuses them day and night before our God. But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb... [That is through having your sins forgiven before God and you forgiving the other person for their sins.] ...and through the word of their testimony ... [they stood for the truth at all times] ...and they loved not their lives unto death" (vs 10-11). So, here's Satan.

Now let's look at our own individual problems. Those are the forces *without*, which we have to be on guard that they don't come *within*. Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 1 and let's see the things that take place *within*. The reason that these things take place *within* is because God has called us. I would absolutely guarantee, with no shadow of doubt, that if God had not brought us together we would not choose each other as friends. If we ran our own country club, we would not allow the different ones to be members of our country club. But, **God is the One Who does the choosing**. And here are the problems that come because of this:

Verse 26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh..." Do we find brethren doing stupid things? *Yes!* Why? *Because we lack wisdom!* Why did God call us? *So we can grow in wisdom!* He didn't call many, many *wise*—did He? *No!*

"...not many who are powerful...[*No!* Most of us are weak] ...not many who are high-born *among you*, Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world..." (vs 26-27). That's why sometimes a congregation of God has to go through different things of foolishness.

I want you to stop and think: From whatever church you come out of, or whatever church you are still in—which hopefully is *Christian Biblical Church of God*—do we give understanding to people who do things that are not wise? *God has called the foolish!*

"...so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things." (v 27). This is a mix of individuals, wherever you go with the Churches of God that is an inherent difficult problem in overcoming human nature. This is why we need to learn to love each other and love God. We have a lot of things we need to put with. We have a lot of things that we need to 'forebear.' Forbearance is a very important thing.

Verse 28: "And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.... [We come to have the love of God and love each other that we don't glorify in ourselves. That's the whole purpose of it.] ...But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (vs 28-30).

We need to understand, as you think and believe and know that God loves you, *also know and understand that God loves all of those that He has called*. As you look and ask God to help you overcome your problems and give you forbearance for your faults and mistakes, *so you need to understand that God also has called and is giving forbearance and understanding to other people that He has called with their problems and difficulties*.

How do we overcome this? *We don't get into a judgmental mode*—in a carnal way. We ask God for His love and His Spirit and His understanding, so that *through love* we get at the cause of it, rather than through carnality get to the *effect* of it. You can eliminate a lot of effects. It's kind of like this: leaving the house open with all the screens off and you go around and every fly that comes in you get a flyswatter and you kill it. You've gotten rid of the 'effect' but the 'cause' is you have the windows open with no screens. Is that foolish? *Yes!* So likewise, if you just go after the problem and not go after the cause, which then, the cause is needing more of Christ in you, needing more of the Holy Spirit in you, the cause is your human nature running rampant when it ought not. Then we can solve the problem.

Even Christ said this, Matthew 18:7: "Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary that offenses come... [that's just the nature of life]...yet, woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" He doesn't want this to be literal and that you literally do it, because unless you get to the cause of the problem of offenses—which is the lack of love—cutting off your hand or your foot will do no good. Because as I have said before, you can cut off both hands, both arms, clear up to the shoulder,

both feet, both legs, clear up to your thighs, and you can lay there as a torso in bed, even having your eyes out *and still have hate*.

But, the effort you need to make to grow in the love of God is going to be *the same as*, v 8: “And if your hand or your foot causes you to offend, cut it off and cast *it* from you...” In other words, what are you doing? What is your hand and foot? *That’s part of yourself*—isn’t it? *So, you’re giving up yourself* is what He’s talking about here.

“...cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed... [this is true in the physical sense, but let’s apply it spiritually]: ...than to have two hands or two feet *and* be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to offend, pluck it out and throw *it* away; for it is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than to have two eyes *and* be cast into the fire of Gehenna. Take heed *that* you do not despise one of these little ones...” (vs 8-10). That’s why it’s so important that we love each other.

In coming out of the world, and in coming out of the problems within whatever religious denomination in the world, or whatever denomination of the Church of God, *we automatically bring the baggage with us!* We’ve got to get rid of that, too. And lots of times, even though we’ve been in the Church of God a long time, what do we do? *We accumulate other baggage*—don’t we? Our lives are just like garages. You always gotta straighten it up! Why? *Because the garage is where you let the baggage accumulate!* We have to get rid of it.

“...for I tell you that their angels in heaven continually look upon the face of My Father, Who is in heaven. For the Son of man has come to save those who are lost.... [That’s why He’s called us, because we were lost. Now, we’re saved in that particular situation.] ...What do you think?...” (vs 10-12)—the man had a hundred sheep.

Here’s the effort we need to make: “...If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, *does he* not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and search for the one that went astray?.... [Yes!] ...And if he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.... [That’s how important it is that we have the love of God to overcome these problems] ...Likewise, it is not *the* will of your Father Who *is* in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” (vs 12-14).

Let’s talk a little bit about offences again. What did James say? ‘Not many of you desire to become teachers because know you not that we shall receive the sterner judgment. And in many things we offend many’ (James 3).

I’ve offended people. Sometimes just my presence offends them. Sometimes what I say to them offends them. If it’s my fault, I gotta do some things to change. If they’re offended with the Truth, then it becomes their fault. But, nevertheless, we all have a tongue—don’t we? Didn’t James say, ‘the tongue is just like a wildfire thing, it just rages and burns!’ And he says, ‘even ships have just a little teeny rudder, but they can turn the whole thing around’ with that little bit of rudder. But no man can tame the tongue.’ Not hard to do, not hard to tame the tongue? *Yesssss! Especially when you’re right!* It says, ‘if you can tame your tongue it’s the same is a perfect man,’ and ‘brethren, does fresh water and salt water come out of the same fountain? No! Even so these things are not from God.’

Here’s how you solve the problem:

- 1) you go ask God for love
- 2) You ask God to help you see it in the right perspective.
- 3) then if someone comes to you and says, ‘I’ve got something I need to talk to you about’ perk up both ears, let your antenna come up, let your radar come up full strength so your going to be receptive.

Handle it this way, one-to-one. The reason is because this is the most loving way to solve it. You can talk back and forth, one to another and it’s not exposed to anybody else.

Verse 15: “*So* then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone....” That’s where to start. This should solve almost all the problems. This is the wisdom of God on how to solve the problems.

Now, there’s a right way to use Matt. 18. I’ve had people use Matt. 18 the wrong way to come to execute their carnal judgment. There’s a right and a wrong way. *Has to be with love and humility!*

“...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother” (v 15). Who knows, whatever the difficulty may be: maybe a misunderstanding, or maybe it’s because of somebody suffering something. or maybe just the person’s carnality got out of hand—could be!

Verse 16: “But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Generally, that should solve it.

But the third step is, v 17: “And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the church....” In other words, it has to become a whole church thing—where you get the wisdom of the whole church involved. And the church here *does not mean the ministry*, it means the church—it means local

congregation, wherever it is. The only thing a minister should do in that case is to help mediate it and maybe set the time when the meeting should be.

“...But if he also fails to listen to the church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven...”(vs 17-18).

So, if you have a problem and you come to each other, and you resolve it and you, as we say in the world: ‘kiss and make up’—even in the Church—give each other a hug, give a handshake, and say, ‘Boy, I’m glad that’s solved and I’m going to resolve that this is going to be the solution.’ It is **‘bound in heaven, by your word.’** You are *obligated* to God! That’s what this is talking about. This is not just church decisions. If you two agree on anything on earth and you say, ‘I will,’ it’s bound in heaven. If you borrow \$500 and say I’ll pay it back—you *will* pay it back! That’s bound in heaven. Now, if you can’t pay it back, then you go to the person. You don’t move out of town and leave them high and dry. And many problems have been in the church because of that.

“...whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request [anything that you agree to], it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the midst* of them” (vs 18-20).

That’s not only in assembling for the Church, that is if you are resolving a problem and difficulty. Christ is in the midst of you. Is Christ in you by begetting through the Holy Spirit? *Yes!* Then exercise the love of God to solve the problem. Many times, things take place where you don’t even know that, and someone comes along and says, ‘Hey, don’t you know that you’re doing this?’ And it comes out in the form of correction—and you get all uptight about it. Don’t do that! Just assess the problem, ‘O boy, if that’s really true, you know, I gotta go pray about this. I really have to apply myself with it.’ Whatever it may be. And don’t think of the other person: ‘Well, you’re just picky, you’re coming after me.’

- Maybe they prayed about it before they even came to you.
- Maybe they see something you don’t see.
- Can you see your faults and problems all the time? *No, verily.*
- Can I see mine all the time? *No! Especially when I think I’m right.*

That applies to everybody. Yes, indeed it does, you see.

Now what do we do? Here’s what we need to do: First of all, we need to set aside all of our carnalities. That’s easier said than done. We’ll have to keep working on that.

Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the Lord*, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called.” Here’s how to do it with the love of God—because Eph 3 talks about the love of God which ‘exceeds all knowledge’ and everything.

Verse 2: “With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, **forbearing one another in love.**”

- because we’re weak
- because we’re foolish
- because we’re stupid
- because we do dumb things
- because our carnal nature hangs out there sometimes

—we need to be *forbearing* of one another rather than judgmental and picky. That’s what was happening in Galatia. They were fighting and backbiting against each other. And we can’t have that in our congregations, brethren—nowhere. We are going to have it from time-to-time and what do we need to do? *We need to use God’s Spirit to change and grow and overcome!*

And remember this: Psalm 119:165 says: “**Great peace** have those who love Your Law, and there is no stumbling block for them [nothing shall offend them (*KJV*)].” If you have forbearance then you’re going to have understanding. And if you see something that happens, instead of running off and going after someone saying, ‘Aha, I see a mistake you have!’—which is easy to do. ***Especially if it gives you power!***

Instead, pray about it. Ask God to open that person’s mind to change. Who can change the person better? You or God? *God can!* Sometimes maybe you have to bring it to their attention. But, I’ve seen many, many times when I’ve just taken it to God, and confessed my sins and my faults and asked God to help me have the love and help me understand, and help me to get myself out of the way. You know the big self: *me, myself and I*. That’s what needs to be done. And with Christ in us and the love of God in us, ***then*** we are going to have the love of God as the thing which is going to get at the ***cause***. Rather than just be problem solvers and work on the ***effects***. Christ within you is going to make the change.

Here's what it needs to be. Here's how God wants all the fellowship groups to grow, Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love..." That's what has to happen, by applying the love of God to overcome and change and love each other and forebear one another.

"...if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions... [giving you deep understanding] ...fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love... [the love of God] ...being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory..." (vs 1-3). If there are offences and they come, don't try and solve it with *strife and vainglory*—get to the *cause*, apply the love of God, because it will never, never fail.

"...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things..." (vs 3-4). Others have needs. Others have difficulties. If you think you have a problem, maybe the one you go to has got problems of their own. Why don't you, when you're done discussing the difficulty, resolve to pray for one another. Will that not heal the breach? Will that not solve the problem? *Yes, because then you can pray in love!* Then you will grow in the mind of Christ.

Verse 5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus." We'll cover with the book of Hebrews right where this leaves off. The greatest thing that God ever did was send Christ, because that's what mankind wanted, and God did do it. He did accomplish it.

Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 13, and let's see the nuts and bolts of how to apply it. I won't have the time to go ahead and expound everything as we go through, but what this does, this shows us the more excellent way of love to overcome:

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.... [Not *as* but you *become* one. So, here's all our carnality hanging out—right? *Yes!*] ...If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (vs 1-2).

If we don't have the love of God, we're *nothing!* You may be something in the world. You may be great to the world. You may be a minister, an elder or a deacon—something great in the former church you were in, but unless you have the love of God, you're *nothing!*

Verse 3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing." You can go out and serve people, help people and give to them and all that—and if you do it without the love of God—you're nothing. It doesn't matter how dedicated you are. Doesn't matter if you do it 20 hours a day and deprive yourself—*you're nothing!*

Here's what works, v 4: "Love is patient [suffers long]... [that's why we talked about forbearance] ...*and* is kind; love envies not, does not brag about itself... [doesn't put itself forward, 'how great thou art'] ...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully... [and being weak and called of the world that way, sometimes we act that way and it's hard to overcome] ...does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil" (vs 4-5).

That's very important because if you impute motives and think evil of the person and you suppose you read the other person's mind and know what's in their heart, then the whole premise of your difficulty is *you're* thinking evil.

Verse 6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things... [regardless of the difficulties with one another] ...believes all things... [of Truth and righteousness] ...hopes all things... [that there will be changes] ...endures all things. Love never fails" (vs 6-8).

***Brethren, that's how we need to love one another!***

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8, 13
- 2) Mark 12:28-34
- 3) Matthew 9:10-13
- 4) Matthew 5:43-48
- 5) Matthew 7:7-12
- 6) John 13:34
- 7) John 15:7-13
- 8) Matthew 24:10-12
- 9) Acts 6:1-4
- 10) 2 John 1-12
- 11) John 15:17-26
- 12) John 16:1-2
- 13) Revelation 12:9-11
- 14) 1 Corinthians 1:26-30
- 15) Matthew 18:7-20
- 16) Ephesians 4:1-2
- 17) Psalms 119:165
- 18) Philippians 2:1-5
- 19) 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 5:22-23
- James 3

Also referenced: Book:

*A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

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