

How to Make the Love of God Work

Fred R. Coulter—August 16, 1986

How does love work? Because sometimes, wouldn't you just like to have it just working a hundred percent *all* the time, with everything going great! We realize that it can't go that way all the time. None of us feel fantastic all the time—do we?

I mean, you just take the cycle of the day: you wake up in the morning. I don't know how you feel when you wake up, but I generally feel pretty good and then you start going through your day. And there's always a down part of the day—do you always have a down part of the day? Some part of the day when you're a little tired, and you always have something that you're going to do to try and compensate for it. Or if you feel too tired you go take a nap, if you can do that. Same way with trying to operate in living and carrying out the things that we need to do.

It is good to say, 'Yes, we need to love God, we need to love each other' and all these things are fine and they're all well and good, but *how* do you make it work? There are times that it's hard to make it work. So, let's go to 1-Corinthians 13 and let's see *how* we can get it to working. What do you do when it breaks down a little bit? It's bound to break down a little bit from time-to-time. Let's notice this one statement, because I think it's very interesting, just this one statement right in the middle of:

1-Corinthians 13:2: "...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

Verse 13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope and love..." So, when it says *if I have all faith and have not love, I am nothing*, what it really is saying in a sense—if you take it the other way around since faith, hope and love all go together—faith and no love you're really talking about two extremes and contradictions that hardly work.

If you have love, you're also going to have a certain amount of faith. If you have a certain amount of faith, you're going to have a certain amount of love. So, he's using a contradictory statement here. *Though* or *if*—he's using a *supposing* statement here. "...if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (v 2).

I got an interesting call from a man the other evening, and we got to talking and he said, 'Mercy is based upon law. Without law there's no mercy.' And I said, 'No, you're wrong, because God is merciful, God is also Lawgiver, but He also extends mercy to some who have never even repented.'

- Didn't He say that if He found ten righteous in Sodom that He would not destroy it?
- That He would be merciful to the whole city?
- Did those people repent? *No!*
- Doesn't God say that He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust?

There's no repentance involved either way. So, it's the same way here, with this thing concerning faith.

I just want to expand this a little bit from last week. Galatians 5:6 "...rather, *it is the* inner working of faith through love." Now, that's a very interesting statement: *faith works through love!* So, if you have love, you're going to have a certain amount of faith. If you have a certain amount of faith, then you're also going to acquire the love.

It's not that you have something over here in one stack and you have something over here in another stack and you have a third thing over here in a third stack. Remember how we talked about things in a circle? That's what love is. Love has many facets that are all tied together and you have to have one and also the other—we're going to see the other things that we need to do with it.

Let's go to 1-John, the fifth chapter; this is one that will always be brought up. Those who believe in commandment-keeping will always bring this up, which is a true statement, but we'll see how it's based here and how these things are put together. This is the beginning of *how we can make love work*, because there are going to be times when you have to get out and make it work. It doesn't happen automatic.

1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments."

I got into a very interesting discussion with this gentleman concerning 'grace,' and he took the posture that if you have grace you do away with commandment-keeping. That is not so at all! It's just like it is here, you can have commandment-keeping without love, and you have seen how that has worked. What happens? *Then you become all focused in on the little physical things!* My wife and I were watching this Jerusalem thing a couple Friday nights ago, and they are commandment-keepers there. Boy, they are commandment-keepers! Where it says they should *tremble* before God's Word, you'll see that they actually make themselves tremble! When the Torah comes by, they'll actually

just make themselves shake all over. Because the Scripture says that we are to ‘tremble’ at the Word of God. They are commandment-keepers! They won’t trim their beard; they let their locks grow; they start preparing for the Sabbath at noon.

I imagine that, to the letter of the Law, they are far better Sabbath-keepers than we are. When they get down to the Wailing Wall and are praying, they put on these—by the law—special little things that are on their heads. It’s the first time I’ve seen it. It’s some sort of little prayer thing they write and put in there. Then they have on their shawl—all the men put on the little shawl—and a little beanie on the back of their head. And they’re all rocking back and forth at the Wailing Wall—praying. They’re commandment-keepers.

Notice what it says *how to make it work* when we love God and love the children of God. It’s right back to all the commandments hang upon what? *To love God and your neighbor!* But here it says, “...we love the children of God: when we **love God** and **keep His commandments**” (v 2). This is part of the string, part of the circle, part of a continuum. That if you love God you will keep His commandments—and keep them how?

Verse 3: “For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” It’s very difficult for people to understand about God’s grace. We need to understand, and I need to emphasize it just a little bit more.

Jesus Christ was sent while we are all sinners—correct? Even before we were born. God did not wait till we were perfect to send Christ. God *loves* us even as sinners! But, that doesn’t mean He loves them to bring them into a *family* relationship; but He still *loves* the world. When we understand, once God calls us and brings us *into* His Church, and *into* His relationship, then with God’s grace *we enter into a different standing with God*.

This is a hard one for the commandment-keepers to understand when they don’t understand about grace. It’s just as hard as the Protestants who believe in grace but not law-keeping. It’s just as hard for them to understand about law-keeping as it is for law-keepers to understand what I’m going to tell you here, and how this love of God can begin to flow even more.

Obviously the way anything works is that it has to work beginning with God. We had a little discussion concerning *works* and *faith*, and it’s amazing how many people do not understand that the incident spoken of in Rom. 4, and the incident spoken of in James 2 are two different things. The one here in the fourth chapter of the book of Romans

has to do when God took them out and showed them the stars and said, ‘Abraham, your seed is going to be like all the stars, without number, if you can number them.’ *And Abraham believed!*

The account in James 2 was, ‘Abraham, take your son.’ *He obeyed!* He did what he was told; he had *works* in the obedience. So, they’re two different instances. When you are told to do something, you should obey. ‘Remember the Sabbath, keep it Holy. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.’ You are to *do* those. But, when we believe as we found through the book of John, God puts us into a completely different status.

Romans 4:6: “Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God **imputes righteousness** separate from works.” That’s the whole key to loving God and loving each other. When you are secure with God then you’re more secure with your fellow neighbors, your friends, your husband, your wife, your brethren.

What makes people very insecure? And reacting? *When you’re not sure how you stand!* If you get into a situation where you’re not sure how you stand before God, how does that leave you? *That leaves you unsure! It leaves you anxious!* Then it results in—and I’ve done it, so I’ll be the first one to raise my hand—you take it out on others—correct? We’ve seen it with the Church.

One of the worst things in the world that can happen is—and we’ve lived through that, and we’ve sat through these sermons—hellfire and brimstone, blood, guts and gore, and ‘brethren, if you don’t overcome God is going to reject you!’ So, you get up there and walk out of there thinking, ‘O God, I’m going to be rejected.’

What do you do? *You go out there and you try and make yourself be perfect—right?* You do really good; you get, a few days and a few weeks guess what happens? *You sin!* Then you remember that hellfire and brimstone and blood, guts and gore, and you go, ‘O God, how am I going to make it?’ You get all frustrated because you don’t understand your status with God.

Granted, we’re not to go out and sin! How many here *planned* to sin this last week? Sat down and said Sunday, ‘Boy, on Monday I’m going to sin this; and on Tuesday I’m going to....’ NO! Not one of you did! But how many of us sinned? Every one of us sinned one way or the other: in our minds or sometimes our attitude, and then we would say, ‘O God, forgive me’ or you think, ‘Whew, that’s a terrible thought’ and get rid of it.

God *imputes* His righteousness. Imputing means that He *transfers to you*, because God is the One Who has to do it. God is the One Who has something that He has to do for us, because, as

human beings, aren't we all helpless. Aren't we told in Isa. 58 that all of our righteousness is as 'filthy rags'? I've never understood that in the past. I think I understand it now. But I'll tell you, when I first read that I thought, *God, that is tough*, because I didn't understand about this one thing.

God *imputes* to us the righteousness of Christ. He *transfers* the righteousness of Christ *to us* in our stead. Here's where the Protestants go 'off the deep end': They say because God transfers that righteousness to you then you don't have to keep the commandments, because you're always righteous before God. No! That's not the reason He does it. He gives it to us *out of love* so that we stand before Him *perfect*—at all times, though we sin. Remember that! That's why, when you sin, *repent*. That's how you keep love working.

You're going to find that once you really grasp this that it's going to help you and encourage you an awful lot. *Imputes* righteousness without works. What could you do to work the works of Jesus Christ? *By yourself you can't do it!* Christ in you can do a certain degree of it, but you only have a portion of God's Spirit.

Verse 7: "**Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**" Are our sins forgiven? *He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins (1-John 1)!*—if we confess our sins—right?

"...and whose sins are covered.... [How are our sins covered? *By the blood of Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice!*] ...Blessed is the man to whom *the Lord will not impute any sin*" (vs 7-8). God does not calculate sin toward us. The Protestants would say, 'Well if God doesn't calculate sin toward us, then we can go sin.' No, that's not true.

Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law." The proper way it should work is this: Since God has called us and has brought us into the relationship what is called *God's grace*; and since God has *transferred* to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and since God does *not calculate* our sins toward us. He will if we turn our back on God. You can be guaranteed He's going to. But, what is this supposed to do for us? *This is supposed to help us keep the commandments of God from a willing heart, rather than:* 'Well, God, I wonder why we have this commandment?' *rather* 'Yes, Lord.' You see the difference? It is made to be an encouragement *for* us and *to* us. That way then you know God is always on your side. With that in mind let's go back to the book of Jude.

Once you understand this and really think about it, this will help you understand about Job. I think I'm learning more about Job by studying the

New Testament—after having studied Job—than I knew when I first read it. I know when I was in Ambassador College and I read the book of Job, it took me a long time to even say, 'Okay, God, I don't understand it, but help me to understand it,' because first time I read it I thought God was wrong. I mean I really did!

You read the book of Job and you think: *how good he was!* I really thought God was wrong. Here, I was there at college, I'm trying, working hard. They tell you to 'pray an hour a day'—yes, pray an hour a day! 'Study an hour a day'—yes, study an hour a day in addition to studying for your classes. If you don't do it you know you're going to be rejected and God is going to spit you out of His mouth, and all this sort of thing. Then I read the book of Job and how great Job was, what he did, and I thought 'God, You must be wrong.' That's not true, because I did not understand the situation that God has put us in.

Jude, v 1: "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to the called *saints*, sanctified by God *the Father* and kept in Jesus Christ." That says an awful lot—doesn't it? That is a tremendous opening—isn't it?

- ...sanctified by God *the Father*..." That means *set aside, blessed, having God's Spirit*.
- ...and **kept in Jesus Christ**"—*and called!* That's something! And that's where we all stand before God.

Verse 2: "Mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." Now we're going to see that they had a little problem there—they had some problems. You must make love work. You must make faith work. You must make everything work *by Christ in you!* Of course, you have your efforts, you have your attitude and you have the way that you ought to do it.

Verse 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." This tells us that they had the same problem that all Christians have. Christian growth and life runs in curves—they go up and down, you have highs and you have lows. There're times when you may have an extended *low* like they did.

"...fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." I just submit that if he wrote this before the end of the first century and he was saying "...fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered..." It kind of puts us way down the road, 1900 years removed from that. So, we have a long way to go.

Verse 4: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- then he goes through with his ‘hellfire and brimstone’
- he talks about coming out of Egypt
- he talks about the angels that left their ‘first estate’
- talks about Sodom and Gomorrah
- he talks about Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses
- he talks about the ‘way of Cain’
- he talks about the ‘way of Baal’
- he talks about the ‘way of Korah’

All of those things! So, they were really getting way down the road from God—weren’t they?

Verse 16: “These are complainers *and* critics, who are walking after their own personal lusts...”

Then he tells us what we need to do, v 20: But you, beloved, *be* building up yourselves on your most Holy faith... [We saw that *faith* works by love. That’s how it works. That’s the fuel that glues it together.] ...praying in *the* Holy Spirit... [the activating power from God] ...*so that* you **keep yourselves in the love of God...**” (vs 20-21). What does this tell us? This is a command: “...keep yourselves in *the* love of God...” That tells us that *we have to work at it!*

Now, we’ve seen some of the things that make love work:

- loving God
- loving the children of God
- faith in the Holy Spirit

“...keep yourselves in *the* love of God...” He’s also praying *have faith!* We have *prayer*, and all of these work together. ***They all go together!*** It’s not just a matter of when praying, that you set aside a certain time and you pray, there should be times when you pray and do that—‘instant in prayer’ (1-Thess. 5). Regardless of where you are. If you need to pray, *you pray!*

“...keep yourselves in *the* love of God *while* you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (v 21). Here’s quite an admonition that we need to keep up and keep doing these kinds of things, here, that He wants us to do.

Verse 22 “Now, on one hand, show mercy to those individuals who are doubting... [he’s talking

about the different problems that they were coming across] ...but on the other hand, save others with fear, snatching *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment *that has been* defiled by the flesh” (vs 22-23). There are some people that need that kind of discipline. It keeps them from going out and sinning.

Verse 24: “Now to Him Who is able to keep them from falling...” That’s quite an interesting statement—isn’t it? That He is able to *keep you from falling*. Remember, he said to ‘contend for the faith once delivered, *and*, keep yourselves in the love of God.’ There’s something that we always need to be doing. Isn’t it interesting, whenever you go along and become complacent about something, something happens—doesn’t it? Sooner or later, something’s going to happen, *always does!*

Like the man who worked up here at Kennacott Copper Mines. I don’t know if you know anything about Kennacott Copper Mines and mining up there; I’ve been up there and they’ve got a huge mountain that they have dug the top of it off, not just leveled, but they have dug it down and when you’re up there it’s a mile straight down to the bottom of that pit. You can go up there and they have these railroad cars. And they have a lot of engineers that drive the electric railroad and they lay the track and blow out parts of it. They lay dynamite and blasting all day long, ‘fire in the hole’ and POW! Then they take these great big huge boulders they they’ve blown out—and some of them are almost as big around as the size of this room, enough to put in these great big, 100 ton dump cars. Each dump car carries a hundred tons—that’s 2,000 pounds_(per ton).

Then they would take them from the mountain, run them on down to the processing mill. And the first thing they would do, they would run these cars in and they would secure them on this track so, they could turn it upside down and empty all the ore, by turning the car upside down and drop the 100 tons of ore out. They would do this with each car that came down. Then they would have a great big thing where they would start moving all the rocks and the different sizes and they would start breaking them down. They would have huge, gigantic things that had big, huge metal prongs that would come and they would take these big boulders and crush them down. I’m sure you heard of these rock-crushers—they make all kinds of noise.

Well, anyway, there was this man who worked there for 22 years. And he was a good worker and had done all kinds of things and he was working in this place where they were crushing these big rocks. Every once in a while when they would be too big, there would be a little pulley-gear that would slip. You have to have some sort of clutch device otherwise everything breaks if it sticks down.

So this was kind of a clutch device, and the pulley thing was coming off. So, for years, he would just reach over and he, with his hand, would push that belt back on and everything would be going. This one time he reached to put it back on and his hand got caught in the crusher and that was the end of his life.

I know it's kind of a long way around and it's kind of a gruesome story. But, when you become complacent and stop working at certain things and violate certain things, you know you shouldn't do, you can become complacent and then the next thing you know, WHAM! So, here this poor guy got it. He worked there for 22 years! All the workers said that he knew better.

Now, none of us has done anything that disastrous. We're all still alive. We're all here. But, it's just to show that when you get complacent things can happen. That's why he says, "...**keep yourselves in the love of God...**" (v 21). That's something we need to do.

Let's see how we can do that, shows us how to do that. Galatians 5:1: "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free..." He's freed us from sin—correct? We're told that we've been freed or justified from 'the law of sin and death.' We still have it in us—God does not condemn us for it, because He hasn't removed it—but have been justified from it, and that gives us freedom.

- Do we have free access to God the Father? *Yes!*
- Do we have free access for God's mercy? *Yes!*
- Do we stand before God with no sins imputed to us? *Yes!*
- Do we stand before God with the righteousness of Christ? *Yes!*

That's the liberty that Christ has made us free.

"...and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage" (v 1). When you're watching some of these television shows, just keep your eyes on anything having to do with Orthodox Judaism and you'll understand what a bondage that that is. Or if you want a very light version of it, see the *Fiddler on the Roof*—that'll tell you about their traditions and everything.

Verse 2: "Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!" We can put it in other phraseology today: If we do those things that are just fleshly ordinances to do—do this, that and the other thing—rather than Christ, it'll 'profit you nothing.'

Verse 3: "Again, I am personally testifying to every man who is being circumcised that he is a

debtor to do the whole law.... [there's no one who can do the whole law] ...You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*, you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ...." (vs 3-4). Justification is to put you in right standing with God. Once you have the righteousness of Christ imputed to you, what other righteousness can you do that's greater? *None!*

"...You have fallen from grace! For we through *the Spirit* are waiting for *the hope of righteousness by faith*.... [What is the *hope of righteousness*? *That is to be as Christ is, eternal life!*] ...Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of **faith through love***" (vs 4-6).

That's a tremendous thing having that kind of faith, You have to *believe* those things that Christ is showing you. Not that I can say, 'Okay, now you must believe it.' No, because I can stand up here and I can say, 'You must do this, you must do that, you must do the other thing.' A good example of *works by law*.

The current thing: all 78 of the top leading people in the Reagan administration will have *drug tests!* That's a *work of law* to make them 'righteous.' *No drugs!* Is it going to stop anybody from taking drugs who wants to take drugs? *No!* The conservatives on the one hand say, 'Everybody ought to take a drug test to show how righteous they are—how good they are.' The liberals on the other hand, say, 'It's an intrusion into my privacy. What I do in my private time is my own.'

I can't tell you to believe this, believe that, believe the other thing, but unless, before God, you *believe it* can I create a law to make you believe it? *NO!* Can I force you to believe it? *NO!* That's what the Inquisition was all about—right? Catholics are going to make the world Catholic if they all die—right? *Didn't work!* Put out Martin Luther, and he said, 'How dare these people.' So, he goes out and he nails his '95 thesis on the wall and he turns around and creates his own little thing over here.

But, they still haven't controlled human nature. So, I can say, 'Brethren, you have to believe these things'—which is true, it's a true statement. But, on our own before God, with God's Spirit, *do we believe it?* We're all in the same situation. I can look back and I remember when we were told by the Superintendent of Ministers, 'Once a year you've got to give a slam-bam really corrective.' *Boy, I did!* I tell you it was something else. It took me a long, long time to overcome just that one, and I'm not so genteel just by nature, and that made it even worse. Didn't change them! *Did not change them!*

It has to be “*the inner working of faith through love*. Verse 7: “You were running well. Who hindered you, *persuading you* not to obey the Truth? This persuasion *is not coming* from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I am persuaded concerning you in *the Lord* that you will be otherwise minded; and he who troubles you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be” (vs 7-10). That’s interesting, Paul didn’t take them out and say, ‘string them up, bring them before the board of inquisition here, cut off his hands and his toenails and all this sort of thing.’ **No!**

Verse 11: “But I, brethren, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I yet being persecuted? Then the offense of the cross has been taken away. I would *that* they would even make themselves eunuchs—those who are throwing you into confusion” (vs 11-12). So, he said that God’s going to take care of them. This was quite a statement, it’s there in the Bible. He was saying, very clearly, ‘Instead of circumcision, I wish they were completely cut off!’

Verse 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**.” There’s the whole key. See how it comes right back to that again? What if someone comes along and does something that kind of offends you? Christ said offenses are going to come. Well, is it against Christ? *If it isn’t, then pass over it. Serve one another with love!*

Verse 14: “For the whole Law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.... [That doesn’t mean that you don’t have to keep the Law.] ...But if you bite and devour one another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another” (vs 14-15). That’s what destroys everything that comes along. There are people—I have seen this in groups in the Church—that start talking a little group over here and have a little group over there within the congregation.

I remember down in Pasadena we’d have almost 1200 there every week. After church what happens is this little group gets over here and they fellowship together; and this little group over here and this little group over here and this little group, so pretty soon that happens—*chew, chew*—and they devour one another—they’re consumed.

Verse 16: “Now, *this* I say... [here’s how you’re going to make love work]: ...walk by *the Spirit*... [In other words, let God’s Spirit direct *your walk!* And that means how you live day-to-day, *your walk!*] ...and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

I don’t know what kind of a problem they had there in the Church in Galatia, but, I tell you, I

would hate to pastor that church. Poor Paul! He really had it between Corinth and Galatia; he said to the Philippians, ‘Oh, thank God for you. You’re the only ones who communicated to me in my trouble, thank you, bless you.’

Verse 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit... [There’s going to be that pull. Just look at the end result of the things of the flesh]: ...and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do.” That sounds an awful lot like Rom. 7—doesn’t it? The good that you want to do, you can’t do. The evil that you don’t want to do, you do it. And you feel wretched when you do it.

Even though this struggle is going on, v 18: “But if you are led by *the Spirit*, you are not under law.” I’m sure that in that particular case, it means you are not under *the penalty* of the law for sinning, because you’re in a situation where *God does not impute sin to you*. You’re in a situation where *you have the righteousness of Christ given to you*.]

Verse 19: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*...” We don’t want to be like the Pharisee vs the publican. Obviously, none of us are doing these things. But, it’s no great credit to us because human nature is the same. I tell you, this world is just getting so wretched out there, that it’s almost impossible to even just be loyal and faithful from the point of view of trying to tell someone else. If you told some of these people, ‘I just believe in just marrying one wife,’ now polygamy is making a comeback through the Mormons. I don’t know if you saw that on some of those special reports. Your polygamy’s working good. All these women can marry one man and we can have all our careers. Believe it or not it’s the women are the ones who are pushing it. ***Blew my mind! It just blew my mind!*** ‘Oh, this is not adultery.’

“...adultery, fornication...” (v 19). I tell you, I don’t know what’s going to happen in these schools, but stand back, because one of these days some parent’s going to go down there with a gun to some school somewhere and ***blow some heads off*** for what they’re doing in these schools to cause the students to commit fornication. I’m not saying, that, I’m the great prophet, now it’s going to happen. But, one of these days some irate parent is going to go down there and do it.

“...uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past...” (vs 19-21).

What a crowd he had to deal with! I mean, I have never encountered a situation like that in counseling people. "...that those who do such things shall not inherit *the* kingdom of God" (v 21).

Now, hopefully, we're a long way removed from that—right? Even to read this it sounds *strange* that Paul would have to write to the church and say, 'Folks, don't do these things that I've told you twice before!'

(go to the next track)

Verse 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23). Who's going to create a law against that? You can't do it! There is no law made against anything like that.

Verse 24: "But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit... [the Spirit of Christ in us] ...we should also be **walking by the Spirit**.... [That's how love works. *We walk in the Spirit!*] ...We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 24-26). So, if we are *in* the Spirit, let us *walk* in the Spirit.

Here's something else to do with the Spirit. It all gets down to a spiritual thing—doesn't it? Spiritual application for us; everything that we do. That's why God has the Sabbath every week. I look back and think, 'Where would I be without the Sabbath every week?' God has it just right. It's not every sixth day. It's not every tenth day. It's not once a month. **It is once every seven days.** I think that that's just fantastic! I don't know about you, but I sure see the value of the Sabbath.

Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you now with all joy and peace in believing..." All these things that I've talked to you about, mentioned here right in the Scriptures, it comes from God. He's the God of all.

- "...**fill you now with all joy**..." This doesn't mean that you're going to be running around just joyful all the time and you run across those who do that—every time you see them, 'praise the Lord, hallelujah!' But it's all **put-on**. That isn't what it means. Joy is also, can be *quiet contentment*.
- "...**and peace in believing**..." That brings us to the whole thing of the peace of God. But when you **really believe** what we have just covered, that brings "...**peace** in believing..."

It brings what kind of 'peace'? What is the most important *peace* that God's Spirit brings? **Peace of mind!** That's the only place where peace is going to

count. You have to keep coming back to that, because all the traumas of the week will wear it thin, it just will.

"...peace in believing that you may abound in hope... [How?] ...*and* in *the* power of *the* Holy Spirit" (v 13). Just remember and keep that in mind, that the Great Creator God, Who has made everything that there is, **EVERYTHING**, took upon Himself 'the law of sin and death' and came to this earth to be the sacrifice **for you, for me**. That's a fantastic thing to really just keep in mind.

When we come to God, we are not coming to just a mental illusion—as the psychologists say: 'Well, now if you believe—and there again is that goodness of the human nature? 'If all good people everywhere that all do good and work together we'd have peace'—right? **Wrong!** We are coming to Christ Who has all power—right? He sits at the right hand of God—doesn't He? **Yes, He does!** He is treating us **this way** and that's fantastic! How are we going to make love work?

- We have to 'walk in the Spirit'
- We have to be loving God, loving the children of God, keeping the commandments of God
- We have to have faith in the Holy Spirit building up that love, building up each other.

Let's see how all of this can be done. It can't be done any other way! There is no human being that's going to come to God and say: 'God, I am finally good enough for you to be accepted of me.' Why? **Because then God owes it to you!** God does not owe anything to anyone. You stop and think about that for a minute. That statement: 'God, I'm finally good enough to be accepted by You.' You are obligating God to your works. That's why it was said, 'that if it is of works it is of a debt!' God owes you something. God doesn't owe anybody anything. Here's the only way it's going to be done.

Colossians 1:27: "To whom God did will to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles..." This is a tremendous thing, brethren. Remember what Paul told Timothy, he said, 'stir up the Spirit that is in you.' There are times when we do need to come to God and let Him **stir up** His Spirit within us—**walk in the Spirit**.

"...the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ **in** you, the hope of glory" (v 27). **Christ in you**—God's Spirit **in you!** What happens with that human mind? It is warring against the human mind, and the human mind against the Spirit. It is there and that's just the way that it is. I'm sure you have those mental battles. Do you have those? **Sure you do!**

Ephesians 4 gives us some very practical *how to make the love of God work*. God doesn't give us something that's impractical. God doesn't give us just some ethereal thing that we all become contemplators and go sit out here on a rock someplace and just think about God. God gives us something that is practical in our lives that we do.

Ephesians 4:1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called." What is this telling us?

- we are called
- we are to work *worthily*

How do we walk worthily? *By Christ in us!* There is no other worth, is there? *No, of course not!* You talk about the real thing. Once you have had as it were, however you want to describe it, something fantastic to eat; something fantastic that you own; something that you hold—maybe absolutely pure gold—once you've had the *real thing* nothing else will work. For example: once you have had the best cut of meat you can possibly have, cooked just the way it should be, what do you do? You compare everything else to that—right? *That becomes the standard!*

It says, "...walk worthily of the calling..." What does this mean? What is a 'vocation' (KJV)? A vocation is a *life's work!* There are such things as *avocations*, which is secondary kinds of work and recreation. This is called 'a vocation'; *the main important thing in your life*. I know it is for me always there! The most important thing! I have to work to live, and for my family to live. But, that's not the most important thing. God says He'll provide. So, we "**...walk worthily of the calling to which you were called.**" How do we 'walk worthily'?

- we have *our part to do*
- we have to *update with love*
- we have to *walk in the Spirit*
- we have to have *faith and hope*

But here it tells us *how*, v 2: "With all humility and meekness... [remember, we're not all strutting around in vanity] ...with long-suffering..." There are times when our patience may wear a little thin. Well, if it wear a little thin, go back and get some padding over it, that's all. Very simple, that padding comes from God.

"...forbearing one another in love..." One of the best ways to make love work is to *forebear*. What is the opposite of forbearing"? *Picking! Overlooking!* And I've seen it in myself, when I pick on someone or something, I don't give any rest for anything. *Nothing* pleases me when I'm 'picking.'

Nothing! Haven't you found yourself that way? When you get into a 'picking' attitude there is *nothing* that that person can do to satisfy you, though they're trying their hardest.

Forbearance is the opposite. *Forbearance* is saying, 'Okay, there are certain things that I don't like, but I can't change them. So, I might as well learn to put it out away from me and not let it bother me. Lot's of times we let things bother us because *we want to let it bother us*. I've done that. I heard on Dr. Dean Edell, that 20% of all operations are because people want the operation and they go to the doctor and they will reject him if they don't get that operation from that doctor. Believe it or not! They *want something!* That's why God says about gossip-mongers—they can't go without. It's not a matter of passing on information. But, you can't sit down and have just a conversation with gossip-mongers without some kind of gossip coming across somewhere. You can't talk about the weather, or a friend. It's almost an incredible thing.

Then you have the others that are so self-centered all they can do is talk about themselves and their pleasures and what they're doing, where they're going. Everybody else doesn't count. So, what you have to do is just back up and say, "Whoa!" A little long-suffering here. Back away!

"...forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 2-3). I've done this, I've gotten people upset, and you know what happens? *People are upset back at me!* Then while I'm all over getting upset, I look at them and I wonder: 'What are you upset for.' Then I look back and I see *I'm the one* who started it! My wife said, 'Well, you started it, let me finish it a little bit.' All right, that's the way it goes. Everything was fine until you came barging in. Everyone of us has got it—haven't we?

Verse 3: "Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." There is one body. Where are we going to go, folks? We've been cast out, spit upon, rejected and run over. There isn't any other place else we're going to go. We're it! We're kind of stuck with each other here; that's the way it goes. But, if we *all* let Christ in us help, then there's no being 'stuck with each other.' We all look forward to it, because we're all in the way God wants us to be—right? *Right!*

Even if you're "...called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (vs 4-5). It can't be any other way.

I was talking to John Bennett the other night. He was saying he was looking forward to this Feast because it's going to be a 'no hassle' Feast. I told him that's the way we want to keep it. Why

have we had such good Feasts? *Because we all come with the proper attitude, because God is going to be there!*

There's "One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all.... [Good southern statement. 'Ya'll' They say it a little bit differently—'ya'll, ya'll'—remember that.] ...But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 5-7).

God deals with each of us a little bit differently. That's what makes it so bad when someone has to get up there and start stomping around and correcting because it doesn't fit everyone. It just does not, it cannot, because we all have a little bit different situation with God.

About the perfecting of the saints, v 13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man..." Perfect person—none of us have reached that, yet; none of us have. That's why, we go along and we think 'man, everything has been really good this week.' Hope and pray next week is good; it may not be quite as good.

Verse 13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ." We all have along way to go to that—don't we? *Yes, we do!* So, let's strive for that.

Verse 14: "So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine... [well, we're not letting that happen] ...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love..." (vs 14-15).

I think this is where more offenses come than anything else, because we get offended—I know I do. Someone comes along and says something to me, and if I just 'ain't' in the mood for seeing it, 'don't you dare bring it up.' You ever been in that mood? *Sure you have!* But what they say is *true!* Sometimes the worse thing to happen is to be in an argument and someone shout the truth, and you know it's true, and the only thing you can do is say, *shut up!* Isn't that your reaction?

Sometimes it may happen that way, and especially speaking the truth in picking. Have you ever had someone just pick away? What they're saying is true, but they just pick, pick, pick away. That's not in love. They need more forbearing. I've done this. I have done this myself. I know what it's like. I've had it done to me.

"...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... [everybody's got something to supply in the body and Church of Christ—*everybody!*—they have their own part in it] ...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" (vs 15-16). That's how it's going to work—up-building!

Verse 22: "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts." That's still there. Ephesians is one of his best churches, folks. I mean, I think Philippians was his best church. Corinthians was his worst church. Oh, what a church, oh man! Then the churches in Galatia were next. This is his best church, but notice what he tells them:

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 23-24). This whole thing in Spiritual creativity is what takes place. Wherever there's creation there's also a little bit of waste. That waste is called 'human nature'—right? You fix a dinner, you create a dinner, what do you have? *All the parts you don't want!* Cut off a little bit of the rotten, you cut off the wilted.

Sometimes you may create something that isn't too good. I remember one time we had pancakes, no milk, made out of water. And were they bad! I remember I was going to do something and it came out so bad you couldn't believe it. At that time when you're doing something and your wife comes over and says, 'don't you think this way' or 'oh leave me alone, it'll work just fine'—you know, and you get it all done; 'I told you so.' Isn't that the way it works? *Sure!*

So, it's *created!* Let Christ create in you. Get rid of all the waste and stuff. Here's the waste you put away, v 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies..." Church members lying one to another? *They were!* I mean think about it for a minute. You think *a lie* is awful, liars! *True*, we should be abhorrent of it, but let's face reality. Church members were lied to and he says, 'put away lying.' He didn't say, 'Thank you, you have put away lying.' He said: 'Put away lying.'

"...and speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another. *When* you become angry, do not sin...." (vs 25-26). That's the hardest thing in the world to do. I have yet really to do that. When I'm angry I generally sin somehow. Then I've got to go back and patch it up. All of us have to say, if that happens to you, 'I'm sorry.'

“...Do not let the sun go down on your anger...” (v 26). Now, why does he say that? I tell you, brooding over something—have you ever done that? Whine about that and brood over it. Think about it. Toss and turn and wake up and figure all the angles. What about this? What about that? So simple, someone comes, go get yourself a glass of wine, sit down, watch the sundown and say, ‘all the wrath for the day be gone.’ It’s not quite that simple, but if we would do that that would help a lot—wouldn’t it? That means that it comes back the other way. You don’t say, the next day, ‘Remember last night?’ That can happen. I’ve done that. Or here you’re going along, and you make some little mistake, and then someone says, ‘You know, I remember when you did that seven years ago.’ Have you ever had that happen to you? I’ve had that happen to me.

Now, verse 27 is one of the, the most important things to do to build up love: “Neither give place to the devil.” How do you give place to the devil? You don’t go off there and call him in—do you? You don’t go out and invite him in. I don’t know a Christian yet who goes out and says, like you would to your dog, (whistle) ‘Come here, fella.’ You don’t do that. No one’s doing that. How do you give place to the devil? *You let all these attitudes and everything build up in you and then there are temptations and missiles that come along!* But he doesn’t even have to get in close to you—just kind of like sending a radio wave—PING! That’s what it means. Don’t give him place.

Verse 28: “Let the one who stole, steal no more... [There are thieves in the Church, brethren!] ...rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working at what *is* good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need. Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth...” (vs 28-29). There are slur words and cuss words and things like that—‘corrupt communication’ which would cover everything; gossip and tongue-lashing and all that sort of thing.

“...but that which is good and needful for edification... [I wish that we could all do that all the time, that would be nice. Let’s see if we can try and do that.] ...that it may give grace to those who hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...” (vs 29-30). We can ‘grieve’ the Holy Spirit by doing stupid and foolish things. That’s what repentance is all about. When we do stupid and foolish things and we come to ourselves and we understand, ‘utt-oh, that was not a thing I should have done.’ Then you repent, heal the breach, repair the gap, whatever. Don’t grieve the Holy Spirit! I imagine there are times when God says, ‘Oh no, not again, really!’—for some of the things we do.

- God has committed Himself to *count no sin to us*.
- He’s committed Himself to *impute the righteousness of Christ to us*.

That’s fantastic! That’s encouraging!

“...by which you have been sealed for *the* day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice” (vs 30-31). ***Now, that says an awful lot!*** This shows that Christians always like to look at the ‘ideal’; and we always like to try and strive for that which is the greatest and the best and the perfect—right? The hard thing to take is when those things come along that are not.

Verse 31: “Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking, be removed from you, with all malice.” Here’s a good group of Christians who said what?

Verse 4: “*There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all*” (vs 4-6). And then he says, “Put away these things” over here. God has got to be merciful and kind and patient and loving. And with His Spirit, He understands that. We have our part to do. This is how we “walk” in love. We put it away.

Verse 32: “And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another... [The last thing he says: the healing thing on ***how to make love work!***] ...forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you.”

There’s got to be that *balm* and that *salve* of forgiveness. Give it *time!* Many times it starts out, ‘I forgive you, I know I’m supposed to forgive you, God says to forgive you, all right, I forgive you.’ You haven’t quite got it a hundred percent, but at least you got the words out. I’ve done that, too. I’ve done that—‘okay, forgive you.’ But, what you do is you ask God for a right attitude.

Turn immediately, pray for your enemies, and say, ‘Oh God, bless this person who’s hitting me over the head with his club.’ First of all, you pray for a right attitude. And then what you do, you say, ‘God, you do with him as You see fit. Not my will, but Your will.’ Maybe my will might be I’m going to run down and do this dirty, no good in—umm! That may be my will, but that may not be God’s will. How would you feel if you were one of the relatives of those who Paul killed? You’d want to do Paul in—right? Next thing you know, he’s preaching in church! Now, ***we’ve never had anything quite that hard put upon us!*** But, God’s will is what should be done. There are certain things you have to

work at. Notice, the contrast. Will these things be there? What is the ‘balm’ that heals? ***Forgiving one another!***

Go back and read the first part of Matt. 18: He talks about offenses will come and your brother trespassing against you and how to handle that and so forth. Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?’” He did not say, ‘How often shall someone in the world sin against me and I forgive him.’ He said, ‘brother.’ What are the hardest fights in the world to stop? *Family feuds!* They are! They’re the hardest ones to stop. I look back on some the arguments my sister and I had growing up, and they were ***fierce***. He’s talking about ‘the brother’; so, in this case, it’s in the Church.

“...‘how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven’” (vs 21-22). Why would He say this? ***Because forgiveness is the ‘salve’ that makes love work over the hurts!*** That there has to be an extra effort made.

You can deal with people in the world. But you don’t have to live with them. You can always up and get away from them—right? Too many people do that in their own marriages. They’re not willing to work out their own problems. They’re too willing to, ‘I can’t live with you anymore I’m going to have to go away.’ Can’t do that. But seventy times seven! There may be a time when you have to go off by yourself and just say, ‘Just leave me alone, I don’t want to be bothered.’ Till you get things sorted out. Sure, there may be a time for that. But here’s the thing that makes it work, right here.

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love...” (vs 1-2). We have to *walk*:

- we’re serving one another
- we’re walking in the Spirit
- we’re forgiving one another
- we’re up-building our love

—all these things are parts of overcoming.

“...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (v 2). Then he goes on showing what we should do.

Ephesians 6 becomes the key focal point of what we need to do to put in the strength. There has to be the strength in what we’re doing. Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord... [you may be feeble physically, but]: ...be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength.”

There is ***nothing***, Christ said, that is impossible to do ***if we ask!*** And ***if we love!*** It will be done, He said, ‘IF you love Me, keep My commandments, and whatsoever you ask, I will do.’ The power of His might. We’re coming to the Power, the whole Power of the universe—and that can be given unto us, and we can use that. There’s still something we need to do.

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...” You see what happens if we give a place for the devil, he’s going to come along and say, ‘Utt-oh, there’s something I can use to stir things up with.’ And he’ll be there. Doesn’t have to be there in person, but he can do it. “...the wiles of the devil...” So, we have to put on the ‘whole armor of God.’ We’re not sufficient unto ourselves, none of us. I’m not; you’re not. We have to make it work.

Verse 12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood... [We’re just simply people. That would be one story!] ...but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*.”

Oh I know, sometimes you just get out there in the world and it’s just frustrating to even just function. We say, ‘I want to watch a good TV show tonight.’ So, you sit down there’s nothing but garbage—***just plain garbage!*** Where does that come from? ‘*Spiritual wickedness in high places!*’ What has the power to put that on television, and it’s there?

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day...” Sometimes every day may feel like an evil day. Once in a while you go through that. Once in a while you come along and everyday you feel like an absolute dirge, a drag, a terrible, miserable thing. How many times I’ve have had days like that? How many times when we all have days like that? When I have to drive home in the heat and smog then it’s really a miserable day—the worst. And when I get home, yes, I’m filled with love and cheer and goodness and kindness and bounce out of the car and run in and tell my wife how much I love her.

No! I come walking in *rrrrrrrr*. She looks at me and says, ‘Have a rough day?’ *rrrrrrrrrrrrrr* I don’t feel like talking, you know. Kind of hot and smoggy—*rrrrrrrrrrrrrr*! Yes, that’s right; go take a shower. That is not the time to bring up a problem. If I come home and I’m feeling pretty good and maybe she’s had rough day with the kids in the neighborhood—and, I tell you, sometimes our neighborhood can really do some things that would blow your mind! I come home, she’s all fed up

with—that’s the last thing in the world to say, ‘Hey—those pancakes this morning were lousy!’ Sometimes every day feels like an evil day. Pray to God and have Him take it away. Pray for sundown, have a glass of wine-go on and make the next day a better day.

“...having worked out all things, to stand... [When you have days like that you have to go to God! Nothing else is going to solve it! Very simple!] ...Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [Which is of Christ. The devil can do *nothing* to Christ—correct?—*nothing!*] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace” (vs 13-15). In other words, always be walking in that way; walking in that love. That’s what’s going to make love work.

Verse 16: “Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith... [remember, it says that ‘*love that works by faith*’] ...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Use it just like *missiles of passion*, that’s what it means in the Greek. Whatever it is. What is the button that is your weakest, that turns on your strongest negative type of personality thing? Huh? What do you think Satan’s going to be looking for? He’s going to look and see if that armor is slipping away enough, and he can push that button.

Verse 17: “And put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” That’s how you overcome it. You don’t prevent *any* of it. This says you go to battle. This doesn’t say you stay home in a bomb shelter. You go to battle. You go to overcome.

Verse 18: “Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication *in the Spirit*, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” In other words, he’s saying, ‘Folks, we’re all in this together.’ We need to work with each other and pray for each other and help each other; and when a problem comes along, *all do their best to overcome it*.

It’s that simple. You can go to the best, most wonderful hotel in the world. They have some rooms here—I won’t say San Francisco, because I won’t go there, so we’ll take a good, clean city someplace—got a beautiful, fantastic penthouse—\$1200 a day! The best food you can have. Waiters and everything else.

- What if the electricity goes off?
- What if the waiters go on strike?
- What if you come there and you’re in a bad attitude?

This, brethren, is how the love of God can work!

It’s not just a thought and ethereal thing, we have to get down to practical things in life. It’s what they call ‘getting into the trenches.’ When you get into the trenches there are going to be all these things of human nature, our own and others mixed in, but we still have to keep walking in that way that God wants us to walk in. It can work! The biggest thing that is good is what has happened here, is where we can look back at incidents in our lives and we can laugh at them now, as being *silly!*

Hopefully we can learn so that when the next silly thing comes along, we can identify it for what it is. ‘Utt oh, let’s put a little forbearance between me and it; overlook it and go on. Sometimes it will just disappear of it’s own accord. That’s how we can make love work. Remember, we:

- have to be loving God
- loving the children of God
- love works by faith in the Holy Spirit
- you have to be up-building the love
- serving one another
- walking in the Spirit
- overcoming and forgiving one another

And that’s how the love of God is going to work!

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

Scripture References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:2, 13, 2
- Galatians 5:6
- 1 John 5:2-3
- Romans 4:6-8
- Romans 3:31
- Jude 1-4, 16, 20-24
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- Colossians 1:27
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- Matthew 18:21-22
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- James 2
- Isaiah 58
- 1 John 1
- 1 Thessalonians 5
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FRC/bo
Transcribed: 11/19/06
Formatted/Corrected: bo—June/2012