

LESSON 6

TRUE LOVE



Scripture Texts: John 17:26; Romans 5:5; Matthew 5:46; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13

In John, Chapter 17, we find Jesus praying to His Father. This prayer was primarily for His people, those with Him then and all who would believe afterward. As a last request for the people He loved enough to die for, He was asking for the most necessary assets to carry them through the years of life's warfare without His physical presence.

God gives His love to His people. We cannot love and forgive without God's love in us. To love we must have love, not our human love, but the love of God. In today's lesson we learn how we can get it.

MEMORY VERSE: *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

1 John 3:18

In the Father's Name

John 17:26 I have declared unto them thy name . . . Jesus mentioned His Father's name often in this chapter. His name represents His Person, His power, His love, all that He is. Jesus gave the Father's name; the disciples accepted it, believed in it, trusted in it, trusted the Father. They were to be kept **through** (by the power of) that name (verse 11).

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them . . . Through the power of His name His love is put into those who trust in that name. Jesus opened the way for each of us to know, measure, and comprehend the love of the Father. The fullness of His love is too much for us to comprehend, but we can know the part of it we feel stirring in our own hearts. He loved Jesus **before the foundation of the world** (verse 24). His love encircles His creation and rests upon each individual human being. The same love He has we are to have. **And I in them.** Where Jesus is there is love.

Love Is in the Person of God

Romans 5:5 The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost . . . To have IT we must have HIM. **God is love** (1 John 4:7-8, 16). There can be no true love in one's life without God in the heart. All of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—have the essential characteristic of love. All three join in any work in us. Therefore, love comes into our hearts when we first meet Jesus and are forgiven. A justified person has love, can forgive those who wrong him, and act as directed by the love of God. The full love of God comes in to flood the soul when it is **shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost**. Many do not reach it because of various reasons. But those who do receive love to live normal, fulfilled spiritual lives and are successful in Christian work.

Our Love and His

Matthew 5:46 There is a natural, human love that God built into man when He created him. Husbands love their wives, parents love their children, and friend loves friend. Even mother animals love their offspring. But human love

is of a limited, selfish kind. We love in areas that touch us and our families. Jesus said, **For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?**

The love of God is of a different quality. His love is pure, holy, impartial, unselfish, unlimited, complete, transforming. His love first flows back as love to God for giving His love. It fills the heart with joy. It is an urge in the heart to give oneself to God that others may know Him. It is forgiveness and love for one's offenders. His love is a warm feeling flowing out to all people, known and unknown, lovable or unlovely. Natural human love alone can never please God or win the world to Him. We must have the love of God. If we love God it will show (1 John 5:3; John 14:15).

Response of a Pure Heart

I Peter 1:22 It is impossible for us to love because we are told we should. We cannot love with a pure love simply by trying. How can we love God, the brethren, our enemies, and one another as God commands? Not with the powers we already have. Not by legislated power. God's love must be put into us. How? **Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit**—these are saved people—**unto unfeigned love of the brethren**—they have obtained love by their obedience and the Spirit's work. Therefore they are to use that love to **love one another with a pure heart fervently**. This shows us how we can have and exercise the love of God.

The Outreach of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13 The work of God is connected by a chain which is anchored by love. Love affects all phases of the life in which the Spirit dwells. Some of its effects are—**faith which worketh by love** (Galatians 5:6). Many long for more faith. Its fullness comes by way of love. **Perfect love casteth out fear** (1 John 4:18). This is not being loosed from outside fear or frightening occurrences; these will come as long as we are in this world. But inward fear (which is entirely different from outward, physical fright) is removed from the heart (2 Timothy 1:7). We are not afraid to face God because He loves us and we love Him.

As this love is good to receive, it is also necessary to live by and to go to Heaven by. **Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing** (verse 3). We may do all things, but if we lack charity it does not count. Faith is great, hope is very important, but unless we are anchored by charity, faith is weak and hope is lost. Love is the first fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Love Must Be Kept

God gives His love but we must keep it. How can we keep love? **Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation . . .** (Matthew 26:41). **Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you . . .** (Hebrews 12:15). . . . **building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God** (Jude 20, 21). When the Holy Spirit comes in, forgiveness, love, peace, unity, joy, and all the rest are there. God cannot do THROUGH you what He is not permitted to do IN you.

JUST A THOUGHT

Unless good intentions are followed by fruitful deeds they avail nothing.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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