

GUIDANCE FROM GOD SERIES

THE LAW OF LOVE

In this message we want to talk about the law of love as a conclusion to the whole series on Guidance From God. Turn to Galatians 5 where Paul speaks about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It tells us in verse 18 that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not just merely describing a Christian's character but Paul was talking about the leading of the Spirit. We have other series on how to be led by the Spirit but in this particular series we are talking more of the inward guidance, which affects 95 to 99 percent of all the decisions we ever made in our lives.

It says in verse 18 *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* And he goes on to talk about all the fruit of the Spirit in verse 22 and 23. Then in verse 25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* Not forgetting the last part of verse 23 it says *against such there is no law.* It means that the law of love, which is contained in the fruit of the Spirit is so powerful and so high that it completely subjugates every other law. Whether it be prophecy, tongue, supernatural guidance, dreams, visions, the office of a prophet or any other guidance system we have the law of love as the highest law.

We understand natural law and human law, legal law or legal principles. In all laws there is always a higher law and a lower law. And that law that is highest affects the law that is lowest. Even in the legal system we have a court system where you go to a lower court and then to the next one and finally to the Supreme Court. There are what I call levels. And a lower court can make a judgment and a rule. But the highest court can overturn it. And when the highest court overturn the judgment of the lower court, it doesn't matter whether the judge in the lower court agree or disagree because whosoever is in the Supreme Court makes a final judgment and

there is no further appeal.

In natural laws there are also levels. There are scientific laws that can control lower laws. We know the law of gravity. Then the laws of propulsion can break or supersede the law of gravity. We know there is friction that prevents us from going fast. But through the inventions of man we are able to travel faster than what a normal human being can do on their two legs. It is because we are using natural law to supersede the lower law.

When we think about spiritual laws, we need to understand that what we have in the natural world and what human can conceive in the legal system can never be better than what God has conceived and created. The natural is a pattern that follows the spiritual. The spiritual rules the natural and not the natural rules the spiritual. Therefore whatever we have in the natural first came from the spiritual. And how is it that when we look at spiritual laws some times we don't understand that there are classified into degrees? For example the law that says that the wages of sin is death is overcome by a higher law of mercy where a just man and a sinless man who is also a Son of God died for our sins and paid the price and He rose from the dead. The lower law of sin and death doesn't apply any more to Christians who receive Jesus into their hearts because the higher law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus now supersedes the law of sin and death. Even though we have sinned and we had sinned before we know Him the higher law now eradicate that sin. Similarly there are many lower laws and higher laws in different areas in the spiritual world.

As we look at guidance from God we know that there are many areas of supernatural guidance. All guidance from God is supernatural but some guidance is more spectacular than others. Having a dream, a vision or a visitation from an angel is very spectacular. Have you realized that many times people put guidance from angels or a vision from Jesus higher than the law of love and the prompting in their hearts to do what is loving and unloving? To me they have put the lower court above the Supreme Court. The bible says that the very nature of God is love. Before there are visions, before there are revelation everything is birthed out from love.

As a conclusion to this series I want to bring to you the fact that the law of love and walking in love and being guided by the spirit of love is higher than the guidance you can get from an angel, higher than the guidance you can get from an apostle, higher than a guidance you can get by an open vision or a dream. It is the final witness test of our guidance system. The law of love which Paul says against such there is no law. There is no other law that can conflict the law of love.

1. The Law of Love Rules Over Religious Convictions

Let me point to the book of Romans chapter 13:8 *Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.* Love is above the Ten Commandments. When you walk in love you keep the Ten Commandments; you fulfill and you supersede them. That's a powerful revelation in Galatians 5: 23 Paul says *against such there is no law.* It could look like it contradicts but it doesn't. What it does is it supersedes, it fulfills the law to its fullness of its requirement and it supersedes that. Against such there is no law. Paul says here *owe no man anything except to love one another for he who love another has fulfilled the law* and he quote all the different commandments.

Verse 10 *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Lets talk about the law of love in supernatural guidance. There are a lot of decisions that we have to make in our life. And I want to emphasize the fact that we can walk with God as Charismatics and some times some end up as charismaniacs, who don't know the balance of the Spirit and the Word. We need to understand there is a Supreme Court to our guidance system and that is the law of love. As Charismatics we receive visions, dreams, prophecies, visitation from God, but the visitation from God and the spectacular guidance system is subject to the law of love in guiding us.

I will show some bible examples how when we received supernatural guidance you still need the Supreme Court of the law of love to guide us. It has the final say. You can be right in your vision and wrong in your interpretation because of the law of love. Romans 14 there is a problem that Paul was trying to solve. He hasn't actually

met the Romans but for some reasons by revelation he is writing the answers to their problems that they are encountering. Whenever you have to make a decision you wrestle with the leading of the Spirit. And we make decisions all the time. The leading of the Spirit doesn't belong just to the five fold ministers, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastors and teachers.

(If you are called to be apostle, prophet and evangelist you would be an ape (A.P.E.). If you are called to be a teacher first then yours could be T.E.A: teacher, evangelist, apostle. Then you will be inviting people for tea all the time. Perhaps if you are an evangelist first you would be E.A.T. evangelist, apostle and teacher, eating all the time. The other way when you have it as apostle first, apostle teacher, evangelist, A.T.E. you ate so you don't eat any more. It's very dangerous when you are a prophet first, prophet, evangelist and teacher, you are P.E.T. But don't take this seriously – I am not speaking by revelation.)

Rom.14:1 *As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.* Let make a very simple statement. All problems, misunderstandings and strife between believers have to do with their internal struggle of perceiving what is right and what is wrong. Every believer senses right and wrong to different degrees. If every one of us sees right and wrong in actually the same way there will never be any problem. In general there are some things that we all agree that is right and wrong. For example, the Ten Commandments are indisputable. But there are many areas of Christian life that we can disagree on what is right and wrong. In case you are wondering whether this is scriptural read the book of Hebrews chapter 5 where it talks about spiritual growth being tied up to the ability to discern between right and wrong. So the more we grow the more we have the ability to discern between right and wrong better than a baby Christian. And that is a statement that tells us that as we grow we have different degrees of capacity to detect more and more accurately what is right and what is wrong in a lot of tiniest details of life. And as long as there are baby Christians and adults Christians, matured Christians, immature Christians there will continue to be problems because we all discern what is right and wrong to different degrees in different ways. We need to have an understanding of the crux of the issue.

As we understand that every one has a conscience and a sense of right and wrong it brings us to the second area. We must be able to give each one a freedom of choice to decide what is right and wrong in their own lives and to live in the light that they have received and respect one another choices. It is when we begin to impose what we feel in ourselves upon another person then the problem comes. If I discern what is right and wrong and I impose my opinion on your life, it would make you miserable. If you discern what is right and wrong and impose your opinion on my life too, I too may become miserable. I am talking about right and wrong above the Ten Commandments. If you are convinced that it is right to rob a bank we got to pray for you. I am talking about things beyond the Ten Commandments. We are talking about little decisions that we make. Is it right to choose this job or not to choose this job? Is it right to continue here or to stop here? All these are subjective. And if you ask for counsel you may have eleven different counsels from ten different counselors.

Now here in Romans 14 Paul is talking about situation where people are of different levels. Such a situation will always be present all the time. It says in verse 2 *One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.* So everyone has his or her own guidance system. So here is a problem. He talks about a situation where some people are convinced that they can eat all things. And there is another situation where some believe that they can only eat vegetables and it is a sin to eat animals. What happens if a person is convinced that way? How do they get the guidance from God?

What happens if somebody thinks that on the Sabbath day Christians should not do anything? Sometimes some Christians think that Sunday is the Sabbath day. Sunday is not the Sabbath day. Sunday is the first day of the week that we gather together to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What about Christians who are convinced that you should not do anything at all on whichever day they are convinced is the Sabbath?

We have to learn how to get guidance from God and stand on what we are convinced of. We have to be convinced of what is right and wrong and do it. We are answerable to God for our own life. One thing I know when you suffer you suffer alone. The very people who teach you and bring you to that suffering may

not stand with you. Of course your real friends will always be there for you whether you are in wealth or in poverty. But the people who give you some fat advice will not be around when their advice doesn't work.

Personally when I advise some people and they follow my advice and if something goes wrong I feel responsible and I will help them through. That is my principle. But for some other people they give out advice and say this advice is given without any prejudice and without any obligation or commitment on our part. I believe if I counsel some body and they follow my advice I am responsible. Some people believe you could sit in the board, give advice and say I have no obligation and no responsibility for that. If you follow what I tell you to do and you get into trouble I am not responsible. If you feel your advice is good enough for others it should be good enough for you. I am just bringing some practical example of how when we make decisions it is important to stand by it. And when we advise others we are responsible for that. We must back them to the hilt.

Of course if somebody don't follow the advice I would say I am not responsible. Some times when I see something happening I say, "Look this is my advice. If you choose to follow I will back you up. If you don't choose to follow I have no responsibility because I have already spoken my heart and mind." So when you come to a crossroad and you say that the Lord guided you to go this way but I discerned that it is not guidance from God but the other way should be taken, what do I do? I absolve myself. But long ago my personality was such that I would just quietly go away without speaking a word to you. Now God has changed me. Now what I would do is I would speak my heart and mind and give people the freedom to choose.

Some are convinced that everyday you can do some thing for the Lord. Some are convinced that you should hold one day above other days. Paul says in Romans 14: 6 *He who observes the day, observe it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.* Look there is contrary guidance. So what's the conclusion? He says let love prevail. Love gives room for people. Remember what we mentioned earlier: the crux of the issue is that all Christian problem and

disagreement are over a guidance system. When a church split up what's happening? The people within the church disagree whether to go this direction or that direction. And they can't resolve the issue. Why do people walk different ways after a long time? It is because they come to a disagreement. And it is important for us to resolve all these.

Some of you may be sitting there saying that this sort of things will never happen to me. Every one of us would have some particular point in our life find something to disagree with another Christian. If you don't get a hold of this principle we may be misguided. So Paul says love prevails. In verse 7 *None of us live to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.* And he basically advises in verse 19 *Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.* In other words let us pursue love. For love edifies and builds up. So we see the law of love.

When we read Romans 14 we say that it may happen to them but not to us. Let me tell you this, the people in the bible here who believed in eating vegetables were not only eating vegetables for health reasons. They were doing it because of religious reason. And religious reasons are the hardest reasons to reason out. For example I don't eat unclean food in a sense. I don't eat crabs, pork and prawn, though once in a while there may be a prawn in my fried noodles. I just swallow it. I don't eat unclean food because of health reason. If somebody disagrees I don't get emotional about it because it is a natural reason. But if I don't eat pork because of religious reason it's harder to reason with me because I am convinced it has to do with my holiness and it becomes an emotional thing. It's very hard to reason with such people. The hardest people to reason with are people who are religiously convinced that what they do are part of their religion. Even in Christianity there are different levels of religiosity.

In those days the laws of health and science have not been discovered as it is in our time. The people were eating vegetables because they were religiously convinced that this is the right way that God wants them to follow. It's the only way to please God. Even non-Christians like mediums and psychics are religiously convinced that if they eat meat their powers are reduced. It is a religious reason and not a natural health reason. And it's very hard to convince this kind of people.

And the people who believe in keeping one day to the Lord are convinced that is the only way you please the Lord. And they consider it a sin if you don't follow them. I am pointing to a fact that there was a problem here among the Roman Christians that Paul was writing to and that it is not a simple problem as you put it. It's a problem of religious conviction. Paul is saying religion or no religion the law of love supersedes them all. Remember what we said earlier, against such there is no law. Love fulfills the law. What are you trying to do if you are convinced that eating vegetables is the only right way to please God? To you that is the spiritual law. On the other extreme there are some who are convinced that to please God you may eat any thing, including scorpions, centipedes etc. In Singapore there is a restaurant that serve you fried scorpions. Whatever reasons there are to make them religiously convinced it is still a law to them.

And the bible says against love there is no law. The bible says that love fulfills the law. That means in a situation where right and wrong is not clear, you look for the right way of love. Even in Christians' relationship with non-Christians you can be religiously convinced until you become fanatical towards them instead of being a friendly person to them. I mean you could go to some one who is a non-Christian and say, "You know that if you don't get your life right with God you are going to hell. It's no more my responsibility I have told you so." Some Christians are convinced that all that they are doing is right. Doctrinally they are right. But you know what is missing – love. Do you think that we would accept Jesus if Jesus had come to the world and said, "You are horrible creatures; I have to die for your sins," none of us would be born again. People do not come to God because of doctrine alone. Few have accepted Jesus Christ because of pure doctrine alone. We came because there was love behind that teaching, behind the doctrine. We are convicted because of love. Now doctrine is important. But doctrine without love kills. And many of us here heard the gospel because we have Christian friends whom we like.

In fact if not for my friends who were chess players, I may not have heard the gospel and accepted the Lord. We were all state players and we used to meet to play chess every week. And one by one they began to disappear on a Sunday,

which is a free day. And I ask them the next day what happened. They said they went to church. Because they were my friends they invited me to church. I went to church not because I was convinced of the gospel, I haven't even heard the gospel, I haven't even seen a bible, I went to church because of my friends. I trusted my buddies in a natural way. And when I went there somebody there came to me and said, "I have something to share with you if you have time." I said, "Fine I have time since I am here." And we sat down in one corner and he shared with me the four spiritual laws. For the first time I saw the doctrine of Christ. Now he didn't roughly pull me aside and said in a aloud voice, "I have something serious to tell you. Sit up and listen." He spoke to me in a gentle voice and he said, "Look I have something to share with you. Can I share with you? I said, "Fine." And he shared with me the four spiritual laws and I saw that it makes sense. Now I didn't accepted Christ straight away. But later on I did. It was because of my friends that I had a chance to hear the gospel. You would have never be able to drag me into the doors of the church if you saw me in the street and witnessed to me. I wouldn't be interested if you were not somebody I knew or trusted.

And it is a true that people attend church and become part of the church because they have friends in the church. If people attend churches because they have the power of the Holy Spirit, you know what the church will be like – a hospital. People only come and get healed and they go. If people only attend church because of the teaching, this can be some of the reason you like the church. You know what it will be like – a restaurant, you go eat some spiritual food and then go off. Church is a place where we should find friends. Of course I am sad with the fact that Christians don't know how to make real friends. But church is a place where we find true friendship. You may first start attending a church because of healing and because of teaching. Or maybe you attend church to look for a wife. What happens if you found a wife, stop attending church? No. Whatever our reason for attending church those should not be the only reasons that keep us there. In the end we must press beyond that to find that church is a place where we develop genuine friendship with people who love us and we love them. It's not an easy task as a pastor to try to get people to love one another, but all the rest of my life I will keep encouraging that. We want to build a church not around the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not around just the Word of God, not just around a manifestation of God. All those things we should have but where people learn to love and care for one another.

That's why it's important when we look at the guidance from God that we received and as we fellowship with one another love should be our primary aim. When we come to making decisions on little things let love be the final goal. The law of love precedes and supersedes all our little religious convictions on little things. The law of love must prevail.

We are not asking you to give up religious convictions that are good for you. Some ladies are convinced that ladies should wear veils in church. I cannot remove that religious conviction because that person is convinced that what they do is pleasing God. And for me to make a rule that when anyone steps in church wearing a veil to take the veil from them, I may make them feel sinful. We know that is not a sin but I may make them feel that they have displeased God. But the only rule I make is this if you are religiously convinced to wear a veil to church, then wear it. But don't make somebody else wear it. We all have our own religious convictions.

Some people believe that when they come to church that they have to dress their best. When somebody else comes with a pair of slippers or in something informal, they say, "Don't you know how to please God? What do you do when you want to meet the managing director or the emperor? Do you dress in slippers?" You make that person feel condemned. To you it's a religious conviction, a personal expression of wanting to please God. Church should be a place where we give room for religious convictions. Let us be gracious. So what is the rule in church? My rule is wear what is reasonable. What is beyond reason is not allowed, like donning swimwear to church.

Religious convictions are the hardest to deal with. In order to deal with that in the church without running down people we give room to people as long as it doesn't break the laws of decency. We need to give room for some religious convictions. If some people come up to the sanctuary and dance in the Spirit and to you they seem to dance like little ducks and you tell them, "If you want to dance in the Spirit please go for three months ballet training, then come and dance in the Spirit," then you are not allowing for religious convictions. A pastor who understands religious liberty will come and say, "It is alright if you dance like a duck but don't knock over chairs and people." In this church dancing in the Spirit is fine as long as you are dressed properly. If your dance movement in the Spirit is like a Russian dance, I

will say, "If you flow in that kind of dance please don't wear skirts." We need to give some room for religious convictions. In our walk with God there are times when religious convictions are necessary to our spiritual growth that others may not understand. Try to hear the pastor's point of view. Even a lady who is convinced about wearing a veil in church it can be a part of her religious walk with God that you must give room for. And Paul says point one in religious convictions let the law of love rule and reign.

2. The Law of Love Rules Over Doctrinal Contention

Secondly in Acts chapter 15 in doctrinal issue in verse 2 *And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.* Then when they came they make a little decision after much dispute, arguments and discussions. They passed a judgment and they made a decision. I want to point to the fact that the decision was made based on three areas, the Word of God, the word of testimony and the Holy Spirit. Now these are all laws. And these laws are subject to the law of love because if you look at the final decision it edifies the people.

In verse 12 *And all the assembly kept silence; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.* That's the word of the testimony.

Verse 28 *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.* This is the agreement of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 29 *That you abstain from things offered to idols and from blood, from things strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourself from these, you will do well.* Farewell. This is the Word of God.

Now the word *farewell* is a Greek word that says *to wish you the best that edify you*. In other words we are seeking the best road that will be the best loving road to help your life. In the same way we may argue over doctrinal issues, we may fight and we may get emotionally worked up but in the end it is a law of love that keeps us going. For love edifies. It is not easy to be together and loving when you differ seriously.

John Wesley and George Whitefield disagree on predestination. But they work together because they loved each other and they loved the Lord. John Wesley speaks well of George Whitefield in his journals. People can disagree on doctrine and they become unloving. How do you know they become unloving? They run down those who don't agree with them. You can believe in what you believe but don't run people down. We can have doctrinal discussion in an atmosphere of love. And love will allow differentiation of understanding over things that have nothing to do with salvation. I mean salvation is based on our faith in Jesus. How you believe in your doctrine of Christology should not affect your love for one another because you are part of the family of God.

3. The Law of Love Rules in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Thirdly in the book of I Cor. 13 love is the guiding factor in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I Cor. 12:31 *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way*. Then in chapter 13 he talks about love in verse 4 onwards, *Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous* etc. Paul is trying to tell them that if you can receive guidance by the gifts of the Spirit and there is no love there the guidance can be wrong. In our earlier messages we talked about the groupings of the gifts and fruit of Holy Spirit. Remember love, joy and peace is one group that has to do with the revelation of the will of God. If you don't walk in love although you have the gifts operating you cannot really see the will of God clearly. You only see part of the will because of the gifts. Love is important when the gifts operate. Paul says that even if you have prophecy in chapter 13:2 and you don't have love, you are nothing. In other words if you are a prophet or you have a ministry of prophecy or you have the gift of dreams, or you have the gift of visions, and if you don't have love you have no right to guide other people or to guide your own life.

But in the Charismatic circles visions and dreams seems to take a higher place than love. People would do the most unloving thing and say, "Thus says the Lord." I am not saying what you received is not from God. Paul never says that the gifts were not from God. He says such gifts operated without love were not edifying. They do not help anybody, not even helping the one who operates the gifts.

Turn to the book of Acts 21 let me show the gifts of the Spirit operating. Verse 9 and 10 *Now this man [Philip the evangelist] had four virgin daughters who prophesied.* (Now definitely that is the ministry of prophecy. They have a very strong gift of prophecy. They spoke to Paul.) *And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.* (Agabus was one of the most recognized prophets in the New Testament church. He came with a group of other prophets. He even had a school of prophets with him. So we can say that he is a well-established ministry.)

Verse 11, *When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'* "

Now after he prophesied in verse 12 everybody told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. This is to show you that the office of a prophet or the ministry of a prophet or visions or dreams cannot guide us outside of love. When you are within a circle of love and you are walking in love all those things are powerful. But if you only have these things without love they don't count as guidance from God.

You know what Paul did? He completely discounted these words spoken through the gift of prophecy. He said look he still have to go. Everybody was convinced that Paul was not doing the right thing. They tried to persuade Paul not to go because of that prophecy. But Paul says they are breaking his heart. Now that becomes wrong. Look at verse 13 *What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart.* If you break somebody's heart it cannot be the leading of the Spirit any more. And so what is the love way? There is a prophet saying these things. What is the most loving way? Let

Paul move according to his conviction. Let him feel the right way to edify. I am sure they must have prayed for him. These are not the only group of people who told Paul not to go. Earlier when they landed at Tyre, they found some disciples who also told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Acts 21:4 *And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go.*

Now *through the Spirit* means that these disciples through the gifts of the Holy Spirit told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. They had the gifts of the Holy Spirit functioning. But love is different. Love considers the other person. Love considers the feelings and the limitations of the person. Love is not one-sided; love is not demanding; love never say, "You be what I want you to be." When people demand that I say, "Look I can't; you must also understand my situation. I can't do what you demand me to do. I don't demand you do what I want. I give you the free choice." So we all must have that love for one another. Love doesn't demand of one another. Love respects the wishes of each other. When love becomes demand it's no more love.

When we walk in love the guidance of God can come clearer. The gifting of the Holy Spirit becomes a confirmation in our walk with God. Sometimes people may have a prophecy that certain things should be done or should not be done. Then they come to the persons concerned and say, "I think what you are doing is wrong." Their prophecy may be correct but if they are without of love then their ministry is out of order. Sometimes people leave their family or place in a ministry and I ask them why do they leave. They say, "God told me, God warned me in a dream." I said, "Fine, but you must have love and responsibility. What you are doing is not walking in love."

I hear of preachers from other countries and they come here and minister. I asked one of them, "Are you married?"

"Yes."

"Do you have a family?"

"Yes."

"Where is your family now?"

“O I left them years ago.”

“How can it be?”

“God told me to preach the gospel.”

I said, “No. If you leave your wife and your children behind, who is taking of them now? You mean your wife has to work and feed the children and you are here preaching the gospel. That is not the leading of the Spirit. That is walking without love.”

He can be the most anointed preacher in the world but it makes no difference. I think he is misguided. It is important for us to understand that the guidance of the Spirit and the gifting operates only under love. Even if God really spoke to that man and told him to go and preach, if he had any love and if he really had to travel often that much from his family, you know what he should do first? He should first of all seek the best way in which his family is very well taken care of. And if his wife doesn't quite agree he should work out some means of understanding with the wife. God could speak to them but they are wrong with the speed of their obedience. Some times we are too slow and some times we are too fast. And the way he is doing he is completely neglecting his wife and his children. It is wrong. You cannot say, “Thus says the Lord,” and everyday you go out witnessing. You are no more working to earn money to pay your rent, pay for the food, your children don't have a father to see them everyday. That is not love and neither is it truly of the Spirit of God. It is possibly fifty percent Spirit and fifty percent of the flesh.

When we are guided by God the highest law is the law of love. And love seeks the best of a person. Don't quote vision, dreams, thus says the Lord, religious convictions to contradict the law of love. For example if God says you must quickly leave a certain place and join a certain group and you come to them and say, “God told me to join you” even the manner of your joining them has to have some order. When God told you to join or help a particular group, you don't go to them as a big boss and say, “God told me to join and I expect to operate in the things of God.” No, you have to learn how to flow with the people. You have to submit and flow with the leadership that is there first. And you got to learn to work with those

people. You got to learn that the people are there who are already doing different things. And you got to seek the most loving way to contribute your gift. So people who come and say, "I am a big boss here," they are not led by the Spirit. That is not the loving way to do things.

Sometimes I sit in committees that organize inter-churches crusades and events. Sometimes it is very funny. There are pastors on this committee with experience to organize massive events and sometimes the most outspoken person is the pastor of a little fifteen-member church who tells everybody else what to do. The more established pastors would have the ability to tell from experience what is workable and what is not but they are keeping quiet. But the inexperienced pastor whose ministry is not established yet wants to tell everybody what to do. If he has years of experience he would know that it is not as easily done as he would think.

There was a young preacher who became quite famous when his name appeared in the *Charisma* magazine. One day this preacher was invited to John Osteen's church to preach. As he preached he started scolding the people. John Osteen at that time had seven thousand members in his church. This young preacher is quite famous. He believed that he is prophet and apostle. John Osteen stepped up to the pulpit and said, "Young man sit down. This is my church and I won't allow you to beat the sheep over their head." And he sat down and John Osteen took over and began to preach. It's important to understand that we can have an office of a prophet, apostle, evangelist, pastor or teacher but we will lose that office without love.

Sometimes as a pastor I have spiritual authority. I could do things in a strong dominating way. I don't use my office to push people around. Sometimes with other pastors and we fellowship I don't use my standing to push people around. If I do that it becomes wrong. I don't walk in love. Or maybe talk about the secular world. You could be a great CEO in the business world. You could be a billionaire with many companies and you are attending church here. Remember this when you come to church you don't push people around. You may have a hundred servants in your house and one thousand employees in your job but when you come to church, you don't come and push the usher. You can be in any position in any place but you don't push people around.

Whether you are in the ministry or in the secular world there is something that God must do with our life. And as a pastor I am not afraid of preaching through whether it concerns a ministry or a business world. Even if my businessmen friends were sitting in the congregation, they need to be told in a loving way. In fact if they were to listen they would become better people. Who knows all their life they have been pushing people with money and position and power. But they have become arrogant and domineering characters. If you really love them you need to tell them that they are becoming more and more ugly as a person. And God wants them to be beautiful and they need to change. They do not have the law of love operating in their lives. The gifts of the Spirit, positions, or titles all these things are not given to you to push people around. The law of love edifies others and counts other better than yourself.

Now that applies to everything. Lets say you are a gifted musician. You don't come and tell people what to do. You could be the most gifted pianist. It's ungodly and ugly if you come and order people around, do this, do that. It will not edify. Its better if you come along them and you began to show them. One of the things I like about our music pastor is that although he is one of the most talented people I have ever known he is also very humble. He doesn't come around and push people. When he is with other musicians who are coming up, when they make mistakes he doesn't run them down. Whatever our talents, whatever our gifts, whatever God has given us, these are not things that should be used outside of love. They must be operated through love. And it's through love that we can guide people and help people. And it's in love that we can get guidance from God. Because when we die to everything outside and inside you will only have one goal in your life, to please God and to love people.

Let me read from Philippians 2:1 *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affliction and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit.*

Let me tell you in church, in spiritual kingdom its still possible to sometimes to

have selfish ambition and conceit.

But in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

And finally love is not an option. Love is not a suggestion. Love is a commandment. We are commanded to love. Jesus says if you love me keep my word and He says this is my commandment that I give to you to love one another. It is not for you to choose whether you want to forgive or not. You are commanded to forgive. It is not for you and I to choose whether you want to be loving or not. We are commanded to be loving. Many people are not breaking the Ten Commandments. But many people are breaking the commandment of love.

As we conclude let me ask this question. Are you breaking the commandment of love? It is as serious as breaking the Ten Commandments. When you break any one of the commandments you break only one commandment. When you break the commandment of love you are breaking all the Ten Commandments together since all the Ten Commandments are in the spirit of love. The greatest commandment that we break is not committing adultery, not stealing. The greatest commandment that we break is the commandment to love. And if we break the commandment to love we have to repent. We have to acknowledge that we have fallen away in love and get ourselves right with God. And if you break the commandment of love you can pray your heart out God will not hear you. If you break the commandment of love you can cry and fast God will not hear you because you broke the commandment. If you break the commandment of God you can ask and pray and ask for a miracle from God you can ask for healing you can ask for prosperity God will not hear you. We need to keep Jesus' commandment of love in our hearts.

