

UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE OF GOD SERIES

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

We have covered how we cannot be perfect unless we grow in the perfection of love. God's love is the gist of the whole gospel. And we need to grow in His love.

I Jn. 1:5 *This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.* In the new heaven and new earth we won't need the sun any more. Because the book of Revelation tells us that our God is the light that lights every inhabitants of the new heaven and the new earth. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Verse 6 *If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth.* So if we say that we know this God who is full of light where there is no darkness. If we say that we know Him and we love Him and then we turn around and walk in darkness then we are lying to ourselves. God is light. We are not being like Him if we are walking in darkness.

Verse 7 *But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.* It is good to see how that we have to walk in light. The question is, "How do we walk in the light?" We know that His Word is light. But however this epistle does not emphasize in that area but one particular area of His Word. How do we walk in light? For most of you, you will begin to think of walking in His commandments. What are His commandments? The main commandment is to love as Jesus loved.

John begins to apply in a practical sense how to walk in light and how to remain in fellowship with God. I Jn. 2:3 *And by this we may be sure that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.* When we ask, "How do we walk in light?" Some of you begin to think the Word of God is the light onto us. You are thinking of keeping His commandments. John brings you further. He says we will keep His commandments then he says in verse 4 *He who says, "I know him," but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* He is saying the same thing as I Jn. 1: 6 but in a different way. Verse 6 says *If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth.* Truth is the real state of being. Then in chapter two verse 4 *He who says, "I know Him" but disobeys His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* He goes so strong as to say that if we say that we walk in light, yet we walk in darkness we are liars. He turns around and says that if we say that we keep His commandments and we say we know Him and don't keep His commandments then we are also liars. Verse 5 *But whoever keeps His word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in Him.*

You notice in verse 5 that being perfected in love is the result of the obedience of commandments. It says that but if we keep His Word love is perfected in us. He says in the first instance God is light. He who walks in God walks in light. In God there is no darkness. We have to walk in the light. If we have darkness we are lying. So we have to walk in light.

Then we ask this question. How do we walk in the light? Your mind began working and you say, "Thy word is the light onto my feet and a lamp onto my path." So you say to keep God's Word is the way I could be walking in the light. Keeping His commandments cause us to walk in the light, which is what John is saying.

Then John asks us how do we know that we keep His commandments and that we are not just hearers? How do we really know that the commandments of God have been worked out in light? By the results. He says that he who keeps God's commandment, not just hear God's commandments, keep means to practice not just

hear. The one who actually walks in it, it says the love of God is perfected in him or her. So the result of keeping God's commandments is that our love is perfected. Love is the measurement by which you have kept God's commandments. After all the information, after all the knowledge, after all the impartation of teaching the test of how much of it you have actually kept can be seen in the amount of love that you have grown in. It is the after effect. There is no way you could keep God's commandments without being perfected in love.

Many times people think that they have kept God's commandments where actually they have not kept God's commandments. But what they have is that they received some knowledge of God's commandments. We know the difference between knowledge and experience. When a person has just graduated from school he or she has a lot of knowledge but very little experience. Knowledge needs to be practiced out and to be worked out in the affairs of life.

He says in verse 9 *He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still.* That is even more direct. He says that God is light and he who walks in God there is no darkness. How do we walk in light, God's word and God's commandment? He says light equals to commandment. Commandment equals to love. Then he says therefore light equals love. Walking in light means walking in love. Walking symbolizes movement. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. It is what you are doing that is essential. Not just what you feel you are doing; not just what you think you are doing; not just what you know. See God is not interested in just what we know. But He is interested in what we do. He is not going to judge you on what you know. He is going to judge you on what you do.

The next verse 1 John 2: 10-11 says *But he who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.* Now we know that every time we do not walk in love darkness is there.

How do we know whether we are in the kingdom of God or in the kingdom of the

devil? By love; love is the test, love is the fruit. The bible says in Colossians 1 that we have been saved out of the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous light. Col.1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.* Your inheritance the promises of God dwells in the kingdom of light. The kingdom of Jesus is called the kingdom of love; it is called the kingdom of light. *He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.* See love and light are related. Do you know why when God was on His throne light shines out? What is the substance of light? The substance of light is His love. Like this light that flows out from this tube here. Scientists tell us that this lighted bulb gives out rays of light. All these rays of light are made of photons. These photons are little pockets of energy that move at different wavelengths. So we know the substance of it.

Now God is light and there is light that shines forth from you. Some of you God may have given the privilege to some of you to see His light in glory. The question is what is causing that light that comes forth from Him? The answer is love. If you take a portion of the light that came from God and you analyze it, it is a substance called *agape* love. Do you know that there is light shining from all of you? The moment you are born again every one has a degree of light shining from them. When we all go to heaven you will see clearly there is light that is shining from all of you in different degrees. We know that the bible says the righteous shall shine as the stars. In heaven there are different degrees of light that we shine in. And that degree that you shine in is according to your degree of development in love. See how important love is. In heaven you cannot hide. Here you can love people it cannot be seen so much except by your action. But in heaven it is visible as light. Love is visible as light. They can see whether you are a loving person or an unloving person.

It says in Col. 1:13 two things happened to you. You have been delivered; you have been translated. Translation talks about movement. Actually it is a movement in the spiritual geography. You have been delivered and you have been translated into the kingdom of His beloved Son, the kingdom of His love. Do you know you can move out of His kingdom? First John was not written to unbelievers. First John was written to believers. Do you know believers can walk in darkness? There is a borderline in the kingdom of God. Lets suppose that this is the borderline. When you were born again you were No. 1 delivered, No. 2 translated. Spiritually you

have been translated into the kingdom of light. That kingdom of light is actually expanding all the time. So actually what takes place is both the translation and the growth of the kingdom of God. So what happens is the kingdom extends to cover your home and your family. The kingdom of God is expanding all the time. Lets just illustrate with you coming in and he coming in too; by these two coming in, the kingdom of God expands.

And so you are walking in the light. Do you know that you can walk in different degrees of the light? And at the same time you could also choose to walk outside of that light. First John was written to believers. He says if a brother says that he loves God but does not practice love that person is walking outside the kingdom of God; outside the borderline. By our attitudes and by our love we determine whether we are walking in the kingdom or outside the kingdom. It's very important because outside the kingdom there is no protection. There is no protection, you are subjected to all kinds of sicknesses; all kinds of demonic activities. The kingdom of Satan has sickness, strife, poverty, darkness and demons. But in the kingdom of light demons cannot exist. Demons cannot stand the light. And in the kingdom of light there is prosperity, there is wisdom, there is righteousness, there is love, there is joy, there is peace. And we determine whether we want to remain here or we can walk there. I am not saying that you are lost. Your salvation has nothing to do with it but your life style. See there are many Christians who are saved, who are born again but who walk like the world. The light that they have is just like the tiniest little candle when it should be a bright searchlight because they haven't developed in that area. They are born again and they are saved. But one day when Jesus comes then they realize that they have not grown in their Christian life.

And those Christians who remain there in that realm they have sicknesses, poverty, demons and all these together with them because it is the kingdom of the devil. You determine which kingdom you want to live in. These evils happen in their lives because they didn't walk in love. When you don't walk in love you automatically move yourself outside the umbrella of God's kingdom into your own little umbrella, which is full of holes. It doesn't protect you. Jesus says no man can snatch those who believe in Me out of My hand. Yes, no one can snatch but you can walk out of it. You can walk out of His protection. You can walk into destruction. Many Christians walk in the permissive will of God, did all kind of things that God never intended them to do and died from all kind of sicknesses. Jesus was never sick.

Jesus never lived in the permissive will of God. Jesus always walks in the perfect will of God. How did He learn to do it? By walking in love.

If I walk in the light, walking in the light is walking in His love and is also walking in the Spirit. Do you know that the bible tells so many times walk in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. But many Christians wondered what is walking in the Spirit. To them walking in the Spirit is like being on cloud 9. Walking in the spirit is just going around prophesying thus says the Lord. The question is, "Which lord?" Walking in the Spirit is just going around and saying in Jesus' Name, "Come out, come out," as if everybody but them has a demon. Walking in the Spirit is not walking on cloud 9, with a sense of spiritual pride, lifting up your nose and saying, "I am spiritual. Hey, I did this, hey, I prayed."

What does it mean by walking in the Spirit? Very simply walking in the Spirit is walking in love. Now when you move out of love, do you know that you can function in certain things without love? You are not functioning in the Spirit. You are functioning in the flesh. See whenever you move out of love you moved out of the Spirit because the spirit of power is the spirit of love. II Tim. 1:7 *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.* And 1 John 4: 18 says *perfect love cast out fear.* See how all the relationship comes in. Walking in the Spirit is walking in His love. That is why for example if God gives me a revelation of a person's life that is unpleasant and that has to be dealt with, because I walk in love I will not run that person down in public. I will not in public say, "Thus says the Lord, 'You did all those unlawful things,'" and everybody hears it. That is not walking in the Spirit. That is walking in the flesh. When you move out of walking in love, you move out of walking in the Spirit also.

Take note of that the next time you want to move in the gifts of the Spirit: when you move out of love you move into your flesh. When you want to lay hands on people, what is your motive? If you want to show off, then you have moved out of love into flesh. See it is so important to determine love in our hearts. Lets say when I am singing a song. Am I singing because I want people to hear me or because of love? When I sing not because of love for God and for His family I have sang in the flesh and not in the Spirit. How do I tell whether it's the Spirit or it is my own flesh? By love. If the love of God is not present the Spirit of God is not present. All we have

to remember walking in love is walking in the Spirit. And all of us will know whether we did in love or not.

The person outside may not be able to tell. It could be the same incident but from a different attitude it makes it in the Spirit or in the flesh. Lets suppose that brother A loves the Lord very much and brother A wants to do something for the needy because of his love. So brother A goes to the needy helps them in their gardening just to express his care and his concern. Now he was walking in love therefore he was walking in the Spirit. Then brother B was just seeking for people to know him. Just wanting to get something from that guy. So brother B goes to that person's family and did all kinds of things for them. But brother B wants something from that person. He does the same things; he could do the gardening and help round. From the outside it looks like the same action and the same help was given. But from the inside it was different. Brother B's action was in the flesh whereas brother A's action was in the Spirit. The same action but from a different perspective of heart determines whether its from the Spirit or in the flesh. In the same way my motive for preaching has to be verified by God. I have to make sure that I do it because of love. Some times people do spiritual things out of a wrong motive. That makes it in the flesh and not in the Spirit. When I sing a song, am I singing it because of self-glorification or because of love? That makes it either in the flesh or in the Spirit. When I desire to move into the gift of the Spirit, do I do it because I want attention? Or because I really care that the needs of people are met. That determines whether it's the flesh operating or the Spirit. Do you know the flesh can do some imitations but it has no power? Power and love goes together. Every time God's power moves love moves. When Jesus heals His compassion always flows out.

Turn with me to Gal. 5:22-23 where the nine fruits of the Spirit are listed. But we have taken the nine fruit of the Spirit out of its context many times. The fruit of the Spirit is listed in verses 22 and 23. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. What is the first word in verse 22? The first word is "but". And we all know that when somebody says, "but" it is always at the conclusion of something. It means that they have said something before. None of you go around starting a sentence with "but". You don't go around using that word by itself. None of us start a sentence with "but" unless you have said something before. Like I don't quite like you but I love you. The "but"

completes the sentence.

Notice what Paul is saying here in Galatians. The context of Galatians 5 talks about walking in the Spirit. Verse 16 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.* Now he is teaching them to walk in the Spirit. Many Christians wonder what is it to walk in the Spirit. Is it just walking in the feel of the anointing? Verse 17 it says *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.* These are contrary to one another. And he is writing to believers. He is not writing to unbelievers. Look at verse 15 what is the first word again. *But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.* Who is he talking to? Believers. Do you know believers some times bite one another? That is walking in the flesh. *But I say to you walk in the Spirit.*

Then verse 18 *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* Walking in the Spirit is also being led by the Spirit. He first list the negative side the works of flesh are immortality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealous, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. *I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such thing shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Col.1:12 says of *the partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light.* You know what your inheritance is? Prosperity, health and abundant life. That is your inheritance. Goodness and mercy flowing in your life. Your inheritance is the land of milk and honey in Christ. Do you know why some people just seem to attract blessings? It doesn't come by accident. Why some people seem to attract blessings and some other people seems to attract problems. We live in a world that is hostile to the things of God. And the devil will have every opportunity to bring disaster on your life. But there is a way where you could attract the blessings of God. Where in your life things just flow. How many of you like to be like that? That explains why in some people's life bad things seems to happen. But in some people sometimes without effort they get blessed here blessed there blessed everywhere. They just get blessed. What are they receiving? The inheritance of God. When you receive an inheritance you do not deserve it. You did not work for the inheritance. Somebody worked at it. Somebody accumulated it. And then because of your position they pass it to you. That's an inheritance. Jesus conquered for us. Jesus paid the price for us. Then He says it is yours now. Do you know that inheritance cannot come to people because they are not walking in the Spirit, they are not walking in love? When you walk in love the inheritance comes forth. You are in right relationship

with God's family. The inheritance is the family blessing of God.

Lets look at Gal. 5:21 the last sentence, *That those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Now you see how important love is. Those who walk in the flesh will not taste health. They will taste sickness. Those who walk in flesh will not taste prosperity; they will taste poverty. Those who walk in the flesh they will not taste abundant life. They will taste a miserable life. They will not inherit the things of God. It may be theirs but their inheritance cannot come to them.

The inheritance is so important that Ephesians 1:17-18 Paul prayed *That the God of our Lord Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.* There are so much blessings God has blessed us with. But its not coming to people because they are not walking in the Spirit; walking in love. They are walking in the flesh. Paul says those who walk in the flesh who do such things cannot partake of the inheritance of the saints. It may be yours but you cannot taste it. In verse 22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such there is no law.* Then he says in verse 25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* He is saying that walking in the Spirit means walking in love, walking in joy, walking in peace, walking in long suffering, walking in kindness, walking in goodness, walking in gentleness, walking in self-control, all these fruit of the Spirit you walk in them. That's what he means walking in the Spirit.

Turn to I Cor. 13 and I will show you that all the fruit of the Spirit came from love. Verse 4 *love suffers long.* So love and long suffering is the same thing. Now you see all the fruit of the spirit can be tied to one word *agape* love. *And is kind* (1 Cor 13: 4) and in Gal. 5:22-23 mentions kindness as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Kindness is an expression of love; long suffering is an expression of love.

Love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. Look carefully what envy, parade and puffed up mean. Envy cause strife, the book of Proverbs tells us

envy brings forth strife. Strife means no peace. You cannot be in peace with another person and be in strife. So love produces peace. When you have peace, you are at peace with God, at peace with yourself and at peace with your fellow brothers you will not strive, you will not envy and you will not puff up. You know why some people are puffed up. They are not at peace with themselves. Some times people don't have peace in their lives so they do things to gain attention. When you have peace you are not worried. You are not puffed up. You do not strive nor you do not parade yourself. Love is peace.

Verse 5 *does not behave rudely*. What is the opposite of rudeness? Politeness and gentleness. Gentleness is strength; gentleness is not weakness. It also means meekness. Gentleness means that I could come to a brother and say you made this mistake. Gal. 6:1-2 says when you correct one another you must do it in the spirit of gentleness. If you have the fruit of gentleness you will say brother lets go for lunch. While he is enjoying that nice lunch, you ask him, "What do you think about this that you are doing? Do you think its O.K?" "Actually I don't feel too peaceful." "That's exactly what I was trying to gather from you that this doesn't seem the best." Then you bring a person to be corrected. If you don't know how to correct people you will kill them. Actually people give the excuse, "I am correcting them." Actually they are killing them. Correction builds up. The way to correct is to build a person up not to tear them and destroy them. Galatians 6 tells us when you want to correct somebody correct in the spirit of gentleness.

Now it says that *love does not behave rudely*. In other words love is gentle. When people love each other they are always gentle. Do you know that people who like each other there is gentleness in their voices? Love produces gentleness. It is those you don't like that you become very rude. Put it this way if you love everybody in the church you will be gentle with everybody. But do you know that being in the family of God, sometimes people don't quite like each other and don't quite love each other. They become rough with each other. What is happening? They don't have love. Love seeks to build. Love takes that fellow out for lunch. If you know how to do an operation you can do it in such a way that people don't even know it. That is what we call a skillful surgeon. And we all need to develop that by love. If you don't have this gentleness when you do the correction and operation, you cut that person. He cried out and the strife becomes bigger.

Then Paul says *love does not seek its own; is not provoked and think no evil*. Does not seek its own. Love controls itself. Love is self-control. You don't let your own self go off. You put a bridle on yourself. Does not seek its own selfish way. And the word *think no evil*, you can tie it back to goodness. What is the opposite of evil? Good. And he is telling you the extent of goodness. Goodness not affect your action, it also affects your thought life. You have no malice against anyone. You don't look at anyone and think evil against him or her. Because of goodness, because of your nature of being good, your nature of thinking good comes forth. If you think good towards others and your intention is only good towards others goodness bubbles from your life. But do you know when you get angry and you have strife you think evil. You say, "I wish a thunderbolt will come down and strike that guy down." We think evil and wish evil. To wish evil to happen to another person is the word called *malice*. So love has no malice. We do not wish evil happen to another person. We only wish good things would happen.

And it says in verse 6 *love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth*. Love is joy the right kind of joy. It is not the wrong kind of joy. Something bad happened to another person you feel joyful. That sounds more like an evil laughter. Love does not rejoice in evil, in the bad things that happen. In fact when you see that love causes you to weep for them. But when you see something good happening, then you rejoice. It rejoices in the truth. When the truth is working it's the real joy. So love is joy.

Then in verse 7 *love bears all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things*. Love never fails. Love is faithfulness. To be faithful you have to bear all things. You have to believe the best to remain faithful. How can people remain with each other and be hooked up together to serve God in the church or in the team? No matter what happens they bear up with it. No matter what happens they believe the best of the other person.

So we see that all the nine fruits of the Spirit come down to love. When you walk in love you walk in the Spirit. Then you can also know when you were not walking in the Spirit. You are walking in the flesh when you are not walking in love. When you

were having strife, anger, it was the flesh. See now you know: you are not in the Spirit when there is no love.