



LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
MIND, AND SOUL  
COURSE WORKBOOK

Also used for  
*Retreat/Small Group Leader Guide*

LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
MIND, AND SOUL

Retreat Leader Guide  
**WORKBOOK**

RICHARD T. CASE



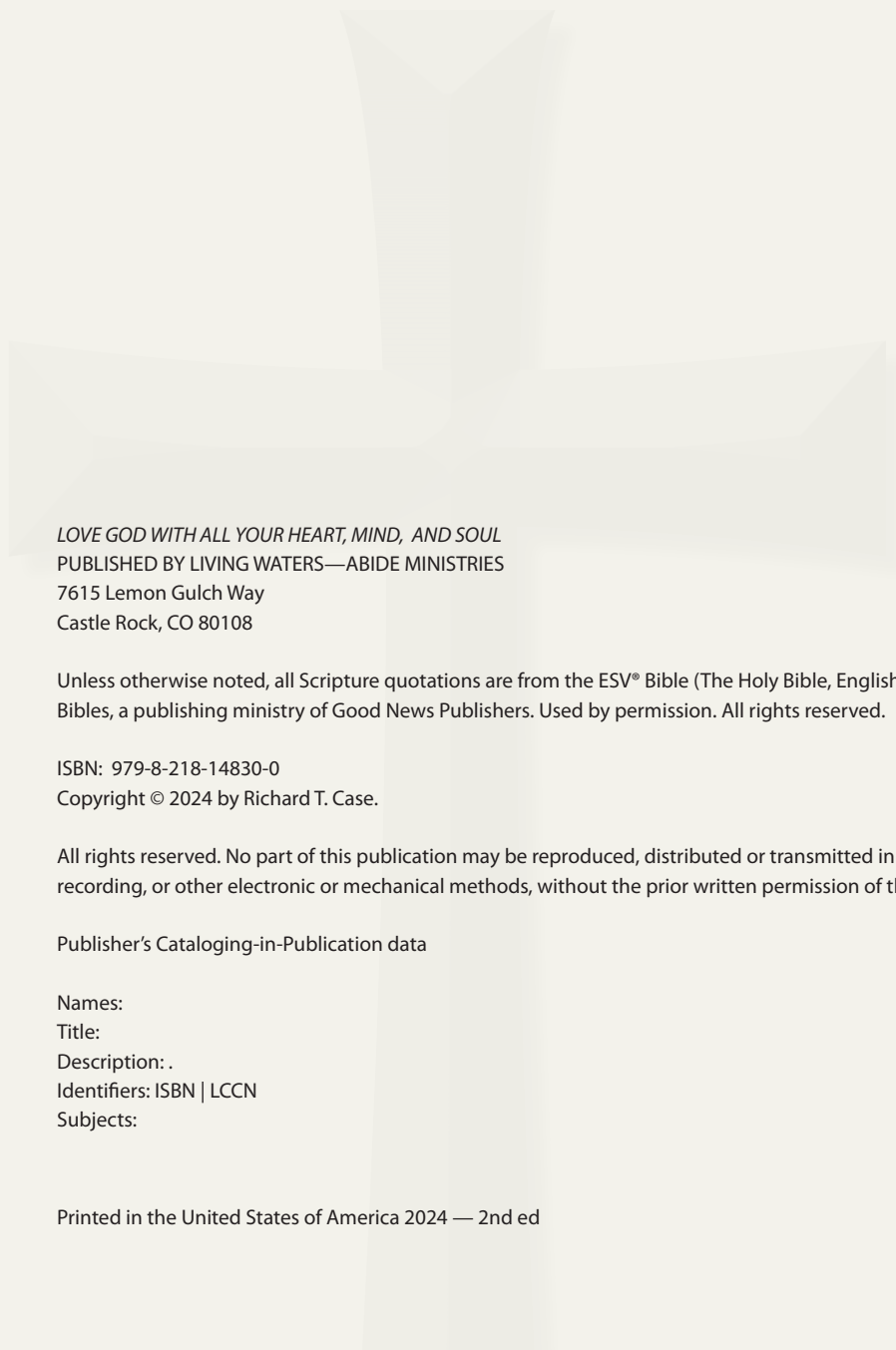


## Dedication/Acknowledgements

I wish to dedicate this course to and thank my wife, Linda, who is a shining example of the joy of living in God's love; and our ministry leaders who have learned this as well. It has been profound to fully understand that we love and can love because He first and does love us. It is a flow through process. He loves us who then invites us to love Him with all our heart mind and soul—and then as we walk together with Him in this love, we are able to extend this love to others, who then learn the same thing; and we all then experience the fullness of God's love—receive, experience and then give away. Linda and the leaders know this love; our marriage is built upon this love and then our ministry community is further built upon this love. It makes the difference between duty, living in judgment & conflict and enjoying the freedom and joy of life as offered by God to us all. Another important element of this love is to receive our instruction from God regarding how we relate to all others without deciding on our own what we think is a good idea. We then fulfill being the extension of His love to the world around us. Thank you, Linda and team. An honor.

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# LESSON 1: WHAT IS GOD'S LOVE & WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN A WORLD OF DIFFICULTY AS GOD RESTORES US FROM THIS WORLD?



**"It says we know God because God IS LOVE; and this love of God was made to manifest among us by God sending His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him."**

**W**elcome to our course: *Love God With All Your Heart, Mind, and Soul*. In this lesson, we will clear up any misconceptions about what it means to love God fully. Maybe you thought that taking care of others or serving them would help you experience God's love. But it's more than just acts of service that bring us close to God. So, how do we experience God's love so that we can then give it away? This course will offer instruction as to how to do that very thing.

**From the following verses, write out the definition of love. How has God loved us? Why is that love? What does this mean for us to understand love and receive love?**

**Read 1 John 4:7-11:**

God Is Love  
<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

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# LESSON 1:

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Love is affection, and it is emotion. Anybody can experience those. That's how man and woman were made. God is talking about something different. It says we know God because God IS LOVE; and this love of God was made to manifest among us by God sending His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. There's a reason you're to live through Him, and the reason is based upon love. Not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation. Then, He says, *If God so loved, we also ought to love one another*. That means that it's not us doing something for God but about living the life of Christ. As we do that, we will then experience His love, which will allow us to extend that love to others. We thus need to learn to live this life of Christ, and then learn how to give that love away to others.

**What does this verse say about who we are if we receive His love? What does that mean? Think of the benefits of being a child of the King. How is this love toward us to be received by us?**

**Read 1 John 3:1:**

**3** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

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How do we live that out? This is a summary of the premise that we've always understood, which is that God's original plan for creation, which we'll explain further later, is to live this fantastic life—what we call exceptional living—through seven exceptional things that God has given us prior to the fall. If we embrace this, we then can learn what love truly is, which flows out of God's heart that He has for us; and through this we will have restored the life that was lost to Satan and the issue of our sin nature. Interestingly enough, we will experience His love through this restoration.



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In Genesis 1 and 2, before the fall, He gave us exceptional authority—victory and power over life, and we were to be a co-creator with Him, exercising the authority over His creation—over the Earth and over the things of the Earth.

In the following four sets of verses, what do we see are the benefits of the exceptional life He has planned for us as recipients of His love? Why is each so important to how we view this planned life and are able to experience this love?

### Read Genesis 1:1–3:

The Creation of the World

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

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How did how God create it all? He spoke it. This is an important part of love that we need to understand. He created it all in the first place by speaking it—called Ex Nihilo—out of nothing. He didn't take something and form it up, He created it by speaking it and all these things, including us, were created by Him as He spoke it. We were created and are part of His creation.

### Read Genesis 1:26–27:

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man<sup>[a]</sup> in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

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<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

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God said, *I'm giving you (mankind) authority over the Earth*—to be co-creators with Me. So, man and woman, who are made in and have the image of God, have the characteristics of God. We're unique. There were lots of things created, including animals. Did they have God's image? No, they were living things, and they have personality and they have soul. They are flesh— physical. But were they created in God's image? No. Why? Because He created us to have characteristics that He has, so that when He sees us, He sees Himself. We're in His image. He sees Himself.

Why were we even created in the first place? For fellowship with Him. His desire was to have communication with us. We are to be the visible expression of the invisible God—God's life through us, His creation. But, we're not God. We're not omnipresent. We're not omnipotent. We're not omniscient. He created us with His characteristics, in His image, for fellowship with Him.

Then He expands the definition of this life—be fruitful and multiply, have offspring. He wanted all this offspring (now 8 billion+ people on the Earth) to be the physical expression of the invisible God. Our life is supposed to be Him living through us. We are the physical expression of the invisible God—and we were made in His image. Keep remembering that because that's going to have a big impact on this aspect of love—remembering who you are—the physical expression of the invisible God.

Next, He says, *I'm going to give you exceptional provision. Everything you have is going to be provided to you. Everything's here, and you don't need nor can you be your own provider.* (In our lifetime, that would mean income.) *I'm going to give you more income than expenses if you live My life—always.* We in America are in the top one percent of the entire world. Still, what's our biggest struggle? Provision, especially

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since we tend to spend more than we make. We always think we need to make more. But He says, *Why don't you let Me give you provision—whether you are the one percent or the 99 percent.*

### Read Genesis 2:15:

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

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God said to Adam—and by inference to Eve—to take care of the garden. Get to work. Have an occupation. Enjoy the things of everyday life that He's going to ask you to be part of—and these include work. Occupation is what you're spending your energy on. It is not necessarily what you get paid for, but what you are called to engage in—to enjoy every day.

### Read Genesis 2:18–25:

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for<sup>[a]</sup> him." <sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed<sup>[b]</sup> every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam<sup>[c]</sup> there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from

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the man he made<sup>[d]</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man."<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

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It's not good that man be alone. *Let Me bring man and woman, My creation, together to have fellowship—intimate fellowship. The two shall become one, unified in unity, following Me and enjoying each other—loneliness will never be an aspect of life with Me.* Never. He never wants anybody to be alone. He always wants you to be in fellowship. That's why being in small groups is so critical. Marriage is a fantastic thing, but in today's culture, a lot of young people think, *Why bother? It only winds up in divorce.* Sadly, this happens to be true. In Christian marriages, 55% wind up in divorce. They see that and say, *Why would I want to do that? If I stay single, I don't have to give up my stuff to somebody who doesn't like me anymore, and I don't like them anymore either for that matter.* I don't want to do that. So, I think I'll just remain single. This view is missing out on a really important piece of life—intimate fellowship. God said this deep intimacy, living in unity with Him, is intended to be part of the abundant life that He has created.

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As we are called to oneness, what is the benefit of going to unity with our spouse, with our friends, with our inner circle? What is the significance of this?

### Read Psalm 133:

When Brothers Dwell in Unity

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

**133** Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell in unity!<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down on the collar of his robes!

<sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion!

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,  
life forevermore.

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He says how pleasant and wonderful it is when man and wife dwell in unity—for there He does what? He commands blessing. *My will then is known by you, and I'll command the blessing.* This is a major part of experiencing God's love.

So, if you look at it in the simplest way, He says, *My plan for your life is to be with Me—giving you provision, giving you exceptional work, and giving you an exceptional marriage with intimacy with your mate.*

The next one is exceptional identity. We are God's children—children of the King; and are granted the privileges of the children of the King. Love is related to being part of the family and enjoying being part of the family—the royal family of God, the King.

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*Review the two following elements of the exceptional life—implied in the description of this life in Genesis 1 and 2. How important are they to our life and our view of life?*

The next one is exceptional health and healing. They had no sickness. They had no illness because the nature and the environment were in perfection. They always enjoyed physical health with no disease or sickness.

The last one was this exceptional communion with God. As we know in John 15:1–5, He says: *I'm the vine, My Father is the divine dresser. What does that make you? Branches. My life for you is for you to stay connected and be My sheep.* Then in John 10, we, as sheep, are to hear His voice. When this happens, we will have intimate communion, be connected, have a spiritual life that is flowing from Him so that the invisible God is living His life out through us—as the visible expression of the invisible God. That was the original intention. Then, in Genesis 1:31, He says, *Everything that I had made was very good—exceptional, abundant. Everything I've done is exceptionally good, and I've given you these seven exceptional things.*

What is the consequence of Adam and Eve's free will choice? How was Satan involved?

Though this was fully His original intention, we see there is a problem. God told Adam and Eve they could eat of everything in the garden, except one tree—the one that will reveal the knowledge of good and evil. Don't eat of that tree, He told them, for if you do, you surely will die. They heard and understood that directive. They didn't bother with that tree at all. They lived in the Garden of Eden, which was hundreds of square miles, for likely somewhere between two and four years.

Then Satan comes along.

Where did he come from? He was an angel of light who rebelled and said, *I will try to become as powerful as God.* But, of course, he couldn't. So, God cast him out of His presence, and said to the rest of the angels, *Who do you wish to follow?* In Revelation 12 it says one-third of them wished to follow Satan, and so two thirds are still angels. One-third are now demons, so Satan is a created being, not God, and not something with the full capabilities of God. He is not omnipresent, not omnipotent, not omniscient—but is finite and has finite followers—demons, who also were once angels.

Earth was created and Adam and Eve lived in the garden there. Satan came along to try to appeal to their free will—which was an important part of His image. Free will was always intended to be a choice to follow God. No one was ever forced to follow God, because this would have led to a forced relationship and not one that is of true and intimate fellowship. His desire was to be our King and for us to choose to be in relationship with Him. This is hard to understand because if it were

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up to us and we were the all-powerful God, what would we do? We would just make everybody follow us because we had the power to do so. But that is not God or God's way. That's not His image. That's not His character. Everything from Him stems from love.

If you're going to experience love, you must then understand that free will is closely related to love. But Satan comes along and says to Adam and Eve, *Surely, God didn't say that. You're not going to have the consequence that God told you. You're not going to die. Don't you want to be like God and know and experience all that is available to you?*

What did they do? They ate of the tree that God said not to, and then they fell. We'll talk about the implication of that, but the mistake they really made because they had perfect communion with Him was that they didn't ask Him if this was true. They didn't understand what it meant to die. They should have asked God to explain that. Is it real? Is it true? They had communion with Him, and they knew they were God's children. They had been given authority over the creation—and were to be fruitful and multiply. That wasn't fuzzy. But when given the challenge of eating of the tree that God had stated not to, they decided, *Yes, that's a good idea.* And they ate of the tree.

What happened next? They died. The Spirit left. They lost their communion with God and the perfection of life because everything was perfect in a perfect creation. What died? Everything died. The Earth is now under entropy of destruction, which is kill, steal, and destroy. And there are a lot of issues and problems with that: disease, sickness, accidents, terrible things that happen, things that break down, things that are difficult, things that are problematic with oppressive consequences. The world is full of trouble—all the time, historically throughout time, and still today. An example that occurred while creating this course is a building in Miami that just collapsed—nothing caused it per se—not even a hurricane. It just wore out because they didn't keep it up. It collapsed all by itself because everything's going to destruction. This includes relationships, which is why we have divorce, conflicts in churches, businesses, families, etc. This happens because we live in a self-centered world (sin nature) in a destructive place of kill, steal, and destroy, which is the nature of Satan. We know something about that.

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In Christ's temptation, what did Satan offer? Who gave him this authority of the kingdoms on Earth? What does that imply, and why is that important to us?

**Read Luke 4:5–8:**

<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

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This is a temptation of Christ. Satan said to Christ, *If you follow me, I'll give you the kingdoms of the world because I've been given authority over them.* It was a real temptation. Christ didn't say, *Ah, that's nothing. You don't have that to give Me.* Rather, He said, *Yes, I know you have this authority over the world, and I know who gave you the authority. We did. God gave it to us, and we gave it to Satan. So, he's received those kingdoms—dominion, authority over all the Earth. He's in control over all the Earth. It's a truth. This happened because of what Adam and Eve did, and we are suffering the consequences of that. Every offspring of Adam and Eve has a sinful nature. What's the sinful nature? Being self-centered, having self-determination, living apart from God, so by nature living in the world with our own plans, outside the protection and power of God. This is what Paul calls the flesh, or self, or carnal.*



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**Because of the sin nature of all humans on Earth, what is the consequence of our ability to have a relationship with God? Why? How was God's remedy to the problem an act of love? To receive this love, what is required now by us? What happens when we meet this requirement?**

### **Read John 3:16–18:**

For God So Loved the World

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world,<sup>[a]</sup> that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

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Those who believe in Christ pass from condemnation to life. And if you don't believe in Him, you'll stay condemned. Why are you condemned? Because you start out separated from God. Why? God's requirement is holiness and perfection. That's what Adam and Eve had before they lost it. But now they have a problem. Can holiness be part of unholiness? No.

But God says, *You don't have a chance alone. And, I still want fellowship with you.* He established the nation of Israel to demonstrate love. He then sent Christ as the complete—It is finished—remedy and says, *Through being born again, you can pass from condemnation to life, and then have that life restored.* So, Christ says to Satan in his temptation, *No, I'm not going to take a shortcut.*

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**After the resurrection, what is still true about Satan's control—authority and dominion—over the world? What does that mean for all of us—even believers—today?**

**Read 1 John 5:18–20:**

<sup>18</sup> We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

<sup>19</sup> We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

<sup>20</sup> And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

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John, who wrote 60 years after the resurrection, said the whole world is still under the control of Satan. Huh? Didn't Christ come to get all authority back? In fact, He says, *All authority has been given to Me*. So, how are both true? Satan still has control of the world, but all the authority has been given to Christ? This is because Christ lives in us, and we take that authority back. To fulfill that, where do we have to live? In the Kingdom of God. It's a spiritual thing.

Yes, the authority is exercisable in the Kingdom of God, which has now been given to us, in Christ. Christ says, *I'm superior to Satan's kingdom, I've defeated him. And there's nothing that he throws at My children—children of the King—that I can't overcome because I'm superior*. However, you still live in that world. And Jesus said that in the world, you're going to have trouble. Why? The world is under the control of Satan—kill, steal, and destroy; and he uses self-centered people—unbelievers and believers who are in the flesh. God has not taken evil out of the world, but invites his children to live in Him, in love, and use the authority that is in Him, to take it back. When? Step by step, piece by piece, life by life.

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At the very, very end, the world will be destroyed, and God will create a brand new heaven and Earth—with no Satan, demonic, sin nature and thus, no trouble. Great. Hallelujah. But until that time, we live in a world that's under the control of Satan. That's true. Secondly is that we still have a sin nature, which defaults to the flesh, the self. A follower of Christ must choose each and every day to put to death self and choose to follow Christ—when? Now and always.

The world is under the control of Satan. But God's Kingdom, which is spiritual, is superior. It is rather simple. He says to us, *Where do you want to live? Do you want to live in the world where you're going to get harmed, and it's not going to go well for you, even as a believer. You're not exempt from that.* That's what Jesus said, *In the world, you're subject to the trouble of the world, its current nature—and I'm not changing that.* But, since I'm superior to it. I can counteract it. Where would you like to live? Do you want to live in the enemy camp? Or do you want to live in His camp where He can restore the exceptional life to you—even while you are in enemy territory? Do you live in His Kingdom? Let Him be King. He can handle this.

This gives us a hint of what love is all about. Come and experience Him. And then you will see how living in Him and in His Kingdom impacts the world—by His love.

Because of His love, He is going to give us abundant life and give it to us superabundantly. Why? That is His life—superabundant—and you can live in Him and thus experience that life. He said He's come back to reconcile all things to Himself—to restore to the original condition what we lost. We know it's not perfect because we're living in an evil world, and we have a sinful nature. Are we going to go back to the perfect life of Adam and Eve? No. But He can restore to us these seven exceptional things. This is His plan, and He can give that back to you. His heart is to overcome the issues you have because you have and will have trouble. He can take care of those. You're going to have things in your heart that need healing—soul wounds. He can restore all and give you the seven exceptional things of abundant life.

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Despite the control of the enemy on Earth, what has God done that we might still experience His love? On what basis did He fulfill this? What then does this mean for how we are to live?

### Read 1 John 4:7–11:

God Is Love

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

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This is written by John, who also wrote that the world is under Satan's control. What, in essence, is John, then, saying about love? God is offering love to us—to YOU. Now that He's provided a way for you to live His planned life for you, live out His life and experience fully His love.

Think about the premise. He says, *You're created in My image. You are the visible expression of Me, the invisible God. This is My love for you. You were in perfection, and it was, in a sense, easy to fulfill while you were perfect and we were in perfect communion. However, you gave it away because you disobeyed, exercised your free will, and suffered the consequence stated—you died and your nature went to selfishness—the sinful nature.* By handing control over to Satan, the world is now a place of trouble and destruction—kill, steal, and destroy; and now with a sinful nature we live in a troubled world. But even after all this, God says, *I would still like you to be the visible expression of Me, the invisible God.* How? By letting Him live His life through us. He will fulfill it and restore to us these seven exceptional

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things in reality—our real circumstances. It's not religious, and it's not even purely spiritual—just be spiritual. Go be a monk—won't that be good? No, love is experiencing His life so that we can be His expression of that love—in reality—the reality of a troubled world with sinful people.

So, can you live out, on your own, the love of God? If you're not born again, you can't live it out at all. Why not? Because you can't be the visible expression of the invisible God if you don't have God within you.

That's not complicated. Can you, as a believer, do it on your own? You can't either because your default is to go back to the flesh. In Romans 8:5–8, we see that when we go on living in the flesh, the carnal, we put to death our spiritual life again (as if the spiritual were dead, shunted off), you are at enmity against God, and you cannot please God. Can we then represent God? No. It's not possible. Thus, love is really letting Him live His life through us.

**As we revisit these verses, what is the choice that has to be made in order to have life with God? Why? What does this then imply for how we are to live?**

### Read John 3:16–19:

For God So Loved the World

<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world,<sup>[a]</sup> that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

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As we already have discussed, as an unbeliever, your position before God is eternal separation, condemned. You start out that way. Every person born in the world starts out that way. Why? The requirement is perfection and because of our sin nature, we cannot achieve perfection; and a Holy God cannot touch imperfection. So just because He has a heart to have relationship with His creation, He says, *It's not My will that any should perish*. But you start out separated, condemned because the requirement is perfection. And then, He says, based upon your selfishness, which you don't and cannot have, there is no possibility on your own to resolve this.

We need to understand: Can anybody resolve this? No, not one. Romans 23:3 says that no one can achieve this no matter how hard we try. So, you can't have a relationship with God. You're condemned. An unbeliever is eternally separated. Can we receive God's love? No. Does God love us? Yes, but we can't receive it. Can we be restored to the image of God and be the visible expression of the invisible God? No, unless we repent, believe in Christ, and then learn to follow God as a follower of Christ. We have potential, but we can't be the physical representation of the invisible God. Can we be restored to the Covenant life where God is saying He's going to restore these seven things to us and bless us to make us a blessing? No, not unless we join the family and learn to follow God. We're never going to experience the fullness of God's love because we did not choose to receive what God has done on our behalf to experience that. And of course, we look at and define *love* completely differently.

Now, let's consider a believer who has the Holy Spirit within him. We have another choice to make. We've received Christ as our Savior and are truly born again. We know our eternal destiny is to be with Him. But while we live on this Earth (the world), we have another choice to make. What's that choice? To live in the kingdom of the flesh or the Kingdom of the Spirit. Either walk in the flesh or walk in the Spirit. Live in God's Kingdom or live in the world. It's a choice.

Unfortunately, how often do we have to make that choice? All the time. We can't just say, *I'm a believer. I chose that so this life should be given to me since I chose to believe and did receive the Holy Spirit*. That's what most believers think. As a believer, God ought to take care of us and never let us experience trouble. But, when we do, who do we blame? God. We are essentially saying, *I thought You were in control, and if You really loved me, then wouldn't You take care of me always and not have me experience trouble?* He says, *I can't. Why not? Though you are a believer, I cannot overcome the trouble for you because you're separated from Me. You're walking by yourself without Me. This opportunity for Me to give you the abundant life in a troubled world is given to you in My Kingdom*. In this Kingdom, you are not the King. He is. He says, *If you walk there, all of this love will be expressed through real*

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*experience.* This is simple. He created you for fellowship and being the physical representation of Him, the invisible God. You received the fact that He did this for you. Now, He would like to live His life out through you, especially since you live in a world of trouble. But you won't let Him. Why not? Because you are at enmity against Him; you have put to death the power available to you—all through your exercise of your free will, which is an important part of His image in you. If He forced you to do it, it stops being love. He created Himself through you. That was His original purpose. He is inviting you to enjoy what He has to offer you. Do you have a heart to go? That's part of love—knowing that He is offering that to you. He hopes and expects that you would say what? Yes. Why? It's a better place. It always surprises Him when people do not accept this life offered.

**What is the reason that Jesus could not do miracles in Nazareth? What does that imply then for how we are to live to experience the fullness of the life of God and His supernatural work in and for our lives?**

### Read Mark 6:1–6:

#### Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

**6** He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup> And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?" <sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."<sup>5</sup> And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup> And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

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He's trying to do miracles, but when He goes to Nazareth, they reject Him performing miracles—they don't want Him to do them. They don't believe it. They don't accept this, and Jesus was dumbfounded. He says, *I'm here to do all these wonderful things for you, and you're saying no, you are not willing to receive it. Then I can't do anything here. I'm going somewhere else.* Why couldn't He do it? Because of our unbelief. The word unbelief means our refusal to be persuaded that what He has to say and do is true. Why did He leave? Because He could not do miracles there because of their unbelief. What is required to be in a place for Him to do miracles and give us this exceptional, abundant life? Choosing to walk with Him and be shown and given this life.

**What are the two consequences of us establishing and living by law (rules) that attempt to provide our own way of spiritual living? What does that mean for us and the choice we must make to live the true, supernatural life of God?**

### Read Galatians 5:1–4:

Christ Has Set Us Free

**5** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>2</sup> Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. <sup>3</sup> I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup> You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified<sup>[a]</sup> by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

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This discussion is in context of circumcision, which is trying to lay on believers another rule—a way to have life with God. In essence, we are saying, *I've decided I want to, I'm going to.* He says what? *When you decide to perform whatever you believe is the way to go (even things that you consider good in your attempt to please Him) by operating in the sin nature, the flesh, the self, you've gone from this*



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*opportunity that He's given you to now having to be perfect.* You've gone back to having to be perfect, and we know something about that. How well can you do that? You can't. He says what you've done is sever (cut off, make of no value) your relationship with Christ. Who has done that? You. By what? By not being willing to be in the Kingdom. He says that you have cut off what is available to you. You've cut it off, and you've fallen from grace (favor)—the ability for Him to live out His life through you and give you the life that He can deliver, including these seven exceptional things. It's very clear and very consequential.

This is also the issue of the church. Believers are being told to just get better at what we are trying to do. Just do, do, do. Because you are operating in the flesh, separate from God, you are falling from the possibility of God delivering to you His best, and thus are not able to experience His love. This is why there is so much struggle and sadness in the Christian church.

Does that mean we will lose our salvation? The answer is no.

**What determines our “reward” in heaven? What thus are the two possibilities regarding the way we live our life? Based upon what? How important is it for how we live our life now? Why?**

### Read 1 Corinthians 3:9–15:

<sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled<sup>[a]</sup> master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup> If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

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If you are truly born again, yes, you will have eternity with Him. He does say that what you do on Earth does determine your reward. What we do on Earth is directly related to us living in the Kingdom and letting God live His life through us. If we don't, we don't receive the full benefit of the available eternal reward. It's not clear in scripture exactly what that is. Scripture says there is reward for living the life of God, and there is not reward for not living the life of God. You are to build on the foundation of Christ living His life out through you. He's saying, *Your whole life could be worthless, wandering around in the desert, never fulfilling My will, never having Me restore anything, not experiencing My love, not able to give away My love.* But the good news is what? You'll be in heaven with Him eternally. Everything of your whole life could be worthless, burned up, but you don't lose your salvation. So, the choice we make is not a matter of losing our salvation. It's a matter of God living out His life of love through us. You have the privilege of enjoying this.

We are called to learn how to receive this life and experience the eternal reward by choosing to live in His Kingdom and experience this life. We are to bring our focus on Him.

**Even though we may not choose to walk with Him and receive His love, what is always true? Why is this so significant for us? What is the good news about this?**

**Read Hebrews 13:5:**

<sup>5</sup> Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

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The good news is that even if we do not choose Him, He is always there waiting for us. He's never forsaking us; He's never leaving us. He's always inviting us to that place, And He continues to do things that we will never fully appreciate. For example, we have the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. God says, *Let Me give you the Promised Land. My Kingdom is to give you the Promised Land. But how did they respond? They said, We're not going. We refuse to be persuaded that what You have said is true, so we are choosing not to walk or go with You.* They severed their relationship with God and did not receive another promise. They wandered around the desert—a place that was awful—for 40 years. They all died outside of God's Will—except Joshua and Caleb.

But God said, *Even with their refusal to walk with Me and having fallen from grace, my favor, I didn't leave them or forsake them.* What did He do? Their clothes didn't wear out. God provided a fire by night (for warmth) and a cloud by day, so they were not scorched by the heat and sun. God says, *Since you are still My children, I will continue to take care of you.* However, there was a consequence.

**What was the relationship with the Israelites who refused to enter the Promised Land and follow God? Why were they not then able to enter the Promised Land? Why was entering the Promised Land not automatic as children of God? What is the implication for how we are to live?**

### Read Hebrews 3:15–19:

<sup>15</sup> As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup> For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup> And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

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God was angry—for 40 years. They made Him sad. Why? Because they wouldn't go with Him. He said, *You're not willing to receive all the beautiful life I have for you. I'm not going to force you to; and I won't leave you nor forsake you.* The meaning of *will not forsake* is to always have the opportunity to return to God, to His Kingdom, and to receive the abundant life that is still promised. Why? Because God says, *How about now?*

That's the good news, the gospel, because He says in 1 John 1:9 that if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, instantaneously. Why? Because He's never left us or forsaken us. Remember confession is implying repentance—a willingness to make a 180-degree turn from the flesh and return to God. Upon returning, He says, *Welcome back—the Kingdom of God is here. I never left you nor forsook you. Here I am. Let's go. How about now?* More good news is that He also says, *I'll take care of the difficulty, the issues, the oppression—even the ones you caused by walking away from Me. I will restore your life. You can again enjoy the seven exceptional things now.*

**As we understand the consequences of not choosing to follow God, how are we to follow God? What happens when we do, and why is this so important to our experience of His life in and through us?**

### Read Romans 8:5; 9–17:

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

### Heirs with Christ

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers,<sup>[b]</sup> we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons<sup>[c]</sup> of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery

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to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

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You have a choice to make. You can either set your mind on the flesh, the things of your own decision making or set your mind on the Spirit and His life for you. The Greek definition of *setting your mind on the Spirit* is to come into harmony with, come to an agreement with, be of one mind and unity with the Spirit (and thus discover and receive God's will). If you follow Him, then He says you're not obligated to live in the struggle of the flesh, but rather you can be led by the Spirit. And if He's leading, what are you doing? Following—willingly.

When you are led by Him, you won't have the spirit of bondage to slavery and fear, but rather to adoption by which you cry out to the Father the joy that you get to be with Him. It's going to be great. It's going to be good. He'll persuade you, convince you, bear witness that you are a privileged child of the King who gets everything that is Christ's. What does that really say? Christ gets the opportunity to live His life through you; and you get to receive all of this beautiful life. By what? Choosing to set your mind on Him.

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What will we discover when we choose to follow God? What will that mean to how we live and experience the life of God?

### Read Ephesians 5:17–21:

<sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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Your opportunity is to discover God's will, and the way to do that is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is interesting because when you are born again, who do you have in you? The Holy Spirit. How much of Him? All of Him, but we can quench Him and in essence put Him to death by severing the power available to us—we can shut Him down. When it says be filled, it's an action. It is to be continually experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit that's resident in you. And all you have to do is what? Seek His will. If you do, you will be filled with the Holy Spirit and all that He is. This will then give Him the ability to live His life out through you. And that's why it's an action that is current and ongoing. It's not a one-time thing—which speaks to those who say that all you have to do is be baptized in the Spirit. Rather, it's an ongoing thing. What does that require? Surrender. If you have surrendered, He says, *You are seeking My will, which then allows Me to live My life out through you.* Why? Because you'll be in the Kingdom of God. And what does that mean? You'll be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit who's leading you into His will.

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**What is another benefit of choosing to follow God? What does that mean to experience His life for us?**

**Read 1 John 5:3–5:**

<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

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He said, *If you're going to experience My love, you have to follow what I tell you. If you follow what I tell you, you will overcome the adversities of the world that are being thrown at you. I'll give exceptional, abundant life to you, as I live My life out through you.* Again, this is our choice. Are we going to follow the flesh and struggle in the world or are we going to follow God? He said there's great benefit if you choose to follow Him.

As we finish this lesson, we can see that there are really three categories of people in the world:

1. Unbelievers can never experience and have fulfilled in them the love of God. They are eternally separated from God.
2. 2) If you choose to process the truth and be born again, you will have the potential to live out the life of God and have Him restore His image into you, the physical expression of the invisible God. There's great benefit to that. You get to overcome the stuff of life that is troublesome, and He gets to restore all that to you.

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3. Because we are not forced to follow God, we can live in the carnal or the flesh where we're at enmity against God, and we're never going to experience what's available to us.

So, choose Him, follow Him, and you will experience His love and be the physical representation of the invisible God.





# LESSON 2: WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?



**"God created us  
(men and women)  
in His image, and we  
are called to be the  
visible expression  
of the invisible  
God—to live out the  
life that He planned  
originally."**

**A**s we continue with: *Love God With All Your Heart, Mind, and Soul*—learning what that looks like, we really must understand some important things.

1. God created us (men and women) in His image, and we are called to be the visible expression of the invisible God—to live out the life that He planned originally. There are seven exceptional things.
2. We fell and lost the original place and nature to fulfill this call through our disobedience and handed over authority of the world to Satan. We have a sin nature that defaults to operate in the flesh, and we live in a world of entropy, where everything is going to destruction, and we will experience trouble in this difficult place.
3. God says He can restore it through the remedy of Christ, and us living in Christ, so He can then deliver this life, and we can be the visible expression of the invisible God. Jesus has come on our behalf by His nature; He went to the cross and was resurrected that we can live in this life. And He says He has come to restore, to give you back that exceptional life.
4. We are called to surrender our will and choose not to walk in the flesh—which we still could, but therefore would sever our relationship with Him and not experience His love—but live in His Kingdom and let Him live His life through us—being led by the Holy Spirit. Let's look at what that life really looks like. How can we describe the life of God that is being offered to us to be the visible expression in today's living?

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## WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?

**How did Jesus define eternal life? What does that mean to our experience of life here? Why?**

**Read John 17:3:**

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

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Christ says, *Eternal life, life that I have for you, is to know the Father and the Son.* It's not to know about the Father and know about the Son. That would be an intellectual exercise, which is how most Christians approach Christian life and the Bible. The questions are more personal, *Do you experience Him? What is His life, and what does it represent? Are you experiencing that?* That's word know means experiencing, participating, having that very life in your life because you are the visible expression of the invisible God. That's why He says, *I need to know you because I want to live My life through you.* This must occur while you are experiencing this, not studying it.

**As we experience this eternal life here and now, what will we receive? What does that mean for our experience in this life? Why?**

**Read 2 Peter 1:1–4:**

Greeting

<sup>1</sup> Simeon<sup>[a]</sup> Peter, a servant<sup>[b]</sup> and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

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### Confirm Your Calling and Election

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to<sup>[c]</sup> his own glory and excellence,<sup>[d]</sup><sup>4</sup> by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

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How much clearer could that be? God says, *I want you to partake of My divine nature*. What does the word *partake* mean? Take it in. Take it in through real experience that is to be part of you—so His nature is being lived out through your life.

Now, we need to remember something that is very important: Does a self-centered nature get better? No. It has to be put to death so that God can then live His life through you—which occurs as you partake of everything that pertains to the beauty of the vibrant life and the power that He has available to you to overcome and reconcile from the unholy. It's all right there. *Let Me live My life out through you, which is My love, so you can experience that life, not hypothetically, but really*. Whose life is that going to be expressed? Your life. What circumstances do you have? You have a soul that has issues of woundedness, patterns that operate in a certain way. So, He says, *Let Me live it out individually through you and your particular place—living in a difficult world, but unique to you, your decisions, and your unresolved issues*.

**On what basis will we receive His divine nature to live life? What is important to receive this and why?**

### Read Deuteronomy 7:6–9:

<sup>6</sup> “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples

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who are on the face of the earth.<sup>7</sup> It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,<sup>8</sup> but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

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He says, *The reason that I'm wanting to give you My divine nature is because you're My chosen people, a special treasure. Whose treasure are you? The God of the Universe's. You are His special treasure. The word *treasure* means valuable, precious. You're special.*

He further says, *Don't think it's because of you. It's because I've given it to you as an opportunity. Anyone who walks with Me is My special treasure. And I'm going to deliver My Covenant to you. What's the Covenant? Him blessing you to make you a blessing. Why are we privileged to receive His Covenant? Because, we're His special treasure. We are His special children.*

Now we can kind of see a little bit about that. For those who have children, what's your attitude toward your children? You want the very best. And if it were up to you, what would you do? Give them the very best. You'd give wisdom. God says He wants to give you insight. *Let Me provide for you. Let Me help you get to the very best.* This is His heart. We must choose to receive it. For our own children, no matter how much you want them to have everything—and since you are able to deliver it—they still have to choose to receive it. They can walk away from it, which explains a lot. You say, *If only they would just receive this one thing, their whole life would be fantastic.* But, you can't force it even though the reason that you wanted them to receive it was that they are your special treasure. And if we feel that way, God says, *I feel a million times more than that. I'm giving this to you because I want to live My life out through you, and I get blessed when you get blessed—you're My special treasure.*

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**In addition to us being individual followers of Christ, what is an essential part of God’s exceptional life for us? Why is this so important? What does that mean for how we live?**

### **Read Genesis 2:18–25:**

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for<sup>[a]</sup> him.” <sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed<sup>[b]</sup> every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam<sup>[c]</sup> there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made<sup>[d]</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.”<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

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God says He wants us to live this out with a mate, a partner. God’s plan for exceptional life is for us to live in fellowship and experience His planned fantastic life. And, if you and your spouse don't come together, you can't live it. You'll be at odds with each other, you will not live this beautiful life. He says, *I can show you how to handle every other difficult relationship. But as a partner, I'm calling you to unity. If*

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*you go to unity, I will command blessing (Psalm 133).* The two of you are to enjoy life. You together are to be the physical representation of the invisible God. And that's why it's so critical to come together in unity.

**How does God define the elements of His exceptional life for us? How do we live this out? What will we experience if we do?**

### Read Psalm 128:1–6:

Blessed Is Everyone Who Fears the LORD  
A Song of Ascents.

**128** Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,  
who walks in his ways!

<sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;

your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD bless you from Zion!  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life!

<sup>6</sup> May you see your children's children!  
Peace be upon Israel!

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This truth is the definition of what life looks like. It includes His love for us, His life for us. We are to enjoy this life and enjoy our work—as He will provide this. As you enjoy each other, enjoy your kids around the table. You're in fellowship with

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each other, and you're enjoying that sweet fellowship. Then it's going to be really special when you can see your grandchildren join you in enjoying life. You enjoy your work, you enjoy your family, and enjoy your grandkids. Now, because of a sinful world and free will, do your kids always join you in that place? God can still give that to you. You, too, can still enjoy your work, and you can still enjoy each other; Remember that this includes a different definition of children—spiritual children. As we are called to receive His life in us, we are called to give it away—your spiritual offspring.

This is the importance of what a small group would look like. Your small group can be your family. God knows that you have difficult and dysfunctional families. He knows that you're offering them the opportunity and they're rejecting to receive the exceptional that you have a heart to give. God says that He does not overcome that. He won't violate people's wills. His heart is for them to live it, but He does not and will not force them—or us. As you are still called to give it away, there will be spiritual offspring who learn to receive and live in the Covenant—blessed to be a blessing. What will they in turn be doing? Giving it away, and then as part of your spiritual family, you have grandchildren—bring them into your family relationship. You can still have the thrill of the body of Christ. The family of Christ. The dynamic of family. If it's not being provided by your own family, you can still have it by what He gives you.

**If we are to enjoy sweet fellowship, what is essential about our fellowship?  
What is important then for how we live in fellowship? Why?**

### Read 1 Corinthians 1:10:

Divisions in the Church

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

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Sweet fellowship looks like there's no dissension. There's no rendering apart, but rather you are knit together. How? By your commonality of seeking God's will, and experiencing His completeness by having the same mind toward agreement with the Spirit of what God's will is for you. You are collectively seeking God's will together and not putting your minds on the flesh —what you want versus what God says. Fellowship looks like it is intended to be sweet and beautiful. We assist each other in seeking God's will and work to process that together. What's He saying, or do you understand what He is saying? Have you thought about this? Where is our heart? Let's go find out God's will. Why? It is best and none better. Why don't we live that way? There's a sweetness to life when we do; and we are not intended to do that alone.

**Define a joyful life. How do we live a joyful life? What does that mean in how we live this out?**

### Read Psalm 100:1–5:

His Steadfast Love Endures Forever

A Psalm for giving thanks.

**100** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;<sup>[a]</sup>

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

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We are to be joyful. The word, *joyful* in the Hebrew means gladness, great mirth and partying—have great mirth and joy as you shout for joy, having Thanksgiving in your heart. Does that mean you won't have trouble? No. But, God is faithful to His loving kindness. The word *faithful* in Hebrew means Covenant loyalty. God says He is loyal to the Covenant. You will experience the Covenant and are to encourage each other to join God to experience His Covenant. This is why you can be thankful and joyful while you are in the problem but knowing that God will bring resolution—it's going to happen. Enjoy that.

**We can live a joyful life because of what? What does that mean for how we receive this and experience joy?**

### Read Psalm 149:1–5:

Sing to the LORD a New Song

**149** Praise the Lord!

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in the assembly of the godly!

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel be glad in his Maker;  
let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise his name with dancing,  
making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

<sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;  
he adorns the humble with salvation.

<sup>5</sup> Let the godly exult in glory;  
let them sing for joy on their beds.

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God says you can rejoice because God does what? He rejoices over you. He wants to deliver to you the Covenant life, which is what brings rejoicing to Him. You can then be rejoicing with Him. He's excited, and you should be excited. He

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will deliver it. That's what you can rejoice about. You are His special treasure, which is why He is thrilled when you walk in His Covenant—letting Him live His life through you.

**If we live this joyful life, what is one of the significant benefits of this? What then does this mean to how we live out life?**

### Read Zephaniah 3:14–17:

Israel's Joy and Restoration

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter of Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;  
he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall never again fear evil.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
“Fear not, O Zion;

let not your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.

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God rejoices over who? You, us. He says, *Join Me in that, and understand that you're not going to fear ever again.* Now, He didn't say you're never going to have evil happen to you. The word evil in the Hebrew means: things that irritate,

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frustrate, and annoy you. Are you going to have that happen to you? Yes. But He says, *If you're rejoicing in My presence with fellow believers, you'll never fear that again.* It doesn't say you won't have trouble—but that you'll never fear it again. Why? Because you'll come to Him and tell Him that you have got a problem. This evil is really irritating you, and then together with God, you can see what God would do about that. You don't have to fear it because God is going to help you—and He is going to resolve the issue. This doesn't mean you won't have trouble, but we know God is going to overcome it. He's going to resolve it, and you'll rejoice. A key part of the quality of life that He has for you is joy. In Romans 14:17, He said that the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit—which is what you will be experiencing.

**In the following three sets of verses, what are the elements of living a joyful life? How might we then practically live this way?**

**Read Ecclesiastes 5:18–20:**

<sup>18</sup> Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment<sup>[a]</sup> in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. <sup>19</sup> Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup> For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

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He says to eat, drink, enjoy. Life is to be enjoyed—His life for you is to be enjoyed. Again, it involves having fellowship join you in this, which by itself brings joy.

### Read Ecclesiastes 2:24–25:

<sup>24</sup> There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment<sup>[a]</sup> in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for apart from him<sup>[b]</sup> who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

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He says, *My life is to give you enjoyment in what you do—working and living together. Let it be good. Let it be pleasant.*

### Read Ecclesiastes 3:12–13:

<sup>12</sup> I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; <sup>13</sup> also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

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# LESSON 2:

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF GOD PROVIDING OVERCOMING AND DELIVERANCE?

There's nothing better than sweetness and joy in life. It's not the heaviness that comes with questioning if you will be better or if you should be better at this, or if you should even go work for God. He said, *Enjoy, I want you to enjoy My life being lived out through you.*

It's pretty simple. Are you enjoying life? For most people, the answer is *no*. So, something's not right. Would you like to learn what that looks like? Most people say, *Yes, I would, but I don't expect it.* But if you are willing to learn this, He can verify that if you do, you will enjoy life. Why? That's the life God wants to give us—to enjoy life.

**What is the difference between working to achieve the joyful life versus receiving it from God, who loves us? Why is this important?**

**Read 1 Timothy 6:17:**

<sup>17</sup> As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

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He says, *Don't chase your own idea of how to live life. Let Me give it to you so that you can enjoy it.* It's not about material things. That's not the type of world that the Kingdom is. You're chasing it and trying to get it yourself. You're not going to enjoy it. How about if I give it to you, and you enjoy it? This includes your house, your work, your trips. Let me give you the things that I want to bring you so that you enjoy it and are not burdened by it.

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**What should characterize your life? How might we experience that in our everyday lives?**

**Read Psalm 126:2–3:**

<sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations,  
“The LORD has done great things for them.”  
<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things for us;  
we are glad.

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Is your mouth filled with laughter? Sweetness is a life that includes laughter, fun, and joy. We should get to experience these when we're together. We should laugh together—lighten the environment and have special moments.

**As we walk in the Spirit, what will we experience? When? What does that mean then for us?**

**Read 2 Corinthians 3:17:**

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord<sup>[a]</sup> is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

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If you walk in the Spirit, you will experience freedom. It's not when or if you get everything resolved—no it is while you are walking in the Spirit that God is bringing resolution. In John 8:28–32, Jesus said, *I do only what the Father tells Me. If you abide in My word, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. And if I set you free, you're free indeed. I'm going to lead you in your life. You will see the truth about every issue, and you will be set free because you have a heart for truth, and My truth brings about freedom.* One of the key aspects of living His life is having freedom now, today. Are you in the middle of trouble? Yes. You have issues and decisions that are unresolved. Do you have things that are a little bit fuzzy about what's going to happen next? Yes. And amongst all of that He says that you still can experience joy and freedom. That's His life for you.

**As we walk in the Spirit, we will be given the Covenant—God's promise to all of us who walk with Him. What is the Covenant? What does that mean as far as what we are to expect in how we live in our relationship with receiving God's love?**

### Read Genesis 12:1–3:

The Call of Abram

**12** Now the LORD said<sup>[a]</sup> to Abram, "Go from your country<sup>[b]</sup> and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.<sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."<sup>[c]</sup>

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The Covenant is, *I'm going to bless you to make you a blessing to others, this promise to you is to bring blessing—Covenant life.* There's a reason for that—so that you become what? A blessing as you live in the Kingdom of God—a flow through. It's never just to take it. It's always, *Let Me bless you to make you a blessing.*

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What are all the benefits of living in the Covenant? What does that mean for how we are to live?

### Read Psalm 111:

Great Are the Lord's Works

**111** <sup>[a]</sup> Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

<sup>2</sup> Great are the works of the LORD,  
studied by all who delight in them.

<sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

<sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.

<sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power of his works,  
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

<sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy;

<sup>8</sup> they are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

<sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.  
Holy and awesome is his name!

<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
His praise endures forever!

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# LESSON 2:

## WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?

He says that He is going to fulfill His wondrous works as He is ever mindful of the Covenant. It's always on His mind. Why? Life is the Covenant. His life for you is Covenant. It's ever before Him. He's going to deliver it. He has a heart to deliver it, and He's loyal to it. And if you have a heart to follow Him, He's going to command the Covenant. And if He commands it, what's going to happen? It's going to come to reality. His life for you is Covenant. The best. The very, very, very best. He wants you to experience that when you experience the best—exceptional life. What do you then do? Give glory to God. You tell others who then ask you if this is also possible for them Yes, it is. Because it isn't about you. It's about you walking with Him and Him wanting to live out His life through you—He's the visible expression of the invisible God. He says to all, Let Me give that to you, and it will be fulfilled.

**To whom was the Covenant given? Why is this important then for how we are to receive the Covenant?**

### **Read Galatians 3:15–18; 26–29:**

#### The Law and the Promise

<sup>15</sup>To give a human example, brothers:<sup>[a]</sup> even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup>Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. <sup>17</sup>This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. <sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

<sup>26</sup>for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave<sup>[a]</sup> nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

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The promise of the Covenant, which was given to Abraham, wasn't given to everybody. It was given to whom? Christ. He received the fullness of the Covenant and the promises of God. When you are walking in Christ, you are His offspring. You will experience the Covenant when you are walking in the Kingdom, in the Kingdom with Christ, who's giving you the Covenant. This is His heart. This is what His love is all about—because He has it, you can receive it, too, if you walk with Him. Just come with Him, and He'll give it to you. It's an automatic extension of His life. You will experience His life and will be blessed by His love for you. If you choose not to walk with Him even though it's available to you, you will not experience His love. He says, *Know that I have it, and it is always available to you. My heart is to give it you—come and be with Me, as there is the only place I can give it to you.*

**If we are living in Christ, following Him as shepherd, what will be true of all the days of our lives? What does this mean then for the type of life we experience?**

### Read Psalm 23:6:

<sup>6</sup> Surely<sup>[a]</sup> goodness and mercy<sup>[b]</sup> shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell<sup>[c]</sup> in the house of the Lord  
forever.<sup>[d]</sup>

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The word for *mercy* is Covenant loyalty. Surely goodness, the excellence of God, the Covenant—to which God is always loyal to give—is going to follow you all the days of your life. God says, *I'll never leave you; never forsake you. My life of the Covenant is following you all the time. All you have to do is stay with Me and receive it.* Any time you say you're willing to receive it, He welcomes that immediately. Why? Because He's always following you. The Kingdom of God is just a step away. It's always available.

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**What does God promise to those who are following Him? How do we play this out then as we imagine our life?**

### **Read Ephesians 3:15–21:**

<sup>15</sup> from whom every family<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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He says, *Christ through the Holy Spirit will strengthen you and your inner being. He will transform you so that you can start to understand, receive, experience the fullness of Christ and together comprehend the love of that fullness.* So even there, he's saying that you can't do that alone. You have to do it together. And with that, He says that Christ will do for you more than you can think or imagine. There's an excitement about that. Our view in the middle of trouble and difficulty circumstances is wondering how He's going to resolve this, and then experiencing the excitement of it. How is He going to show us His exceptional living—in a way that is more than we could think or imagine? God says, *I want to provide for you the excitement, the adventure. Life is going to be adventurous. You're going to be part of something adventurous as opposed to thinking about trying to resolve it yourself and trying to make it all secure.* Actually, it's going to be the opposite. It's going to be an adventure because He's giving you the Covenant. Even though you're in a wicked world, He's going to have you experience things that you can't imagine.

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**What does it mean to not neglect so great a salvation? If we do experience God's full salvation for us, what will God demonstrate in our life? What does that mean regarding how we are to live?**

### **Read Hebrews 2:1-4:**

#### Warning Against Neglecting Salvation

**2** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

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He says, *Don't neglect so great a salvation. Let Me live My life out to you because I'm going to bear witness to signs and miracles, wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to My will.* The Greek interpretation of this means miracles, miracles, and more miracles. And it'll be spectacular. Who's going to do that work? He is. Where? When we're in the Kingdom, in His life. Your life is going to be full of the miraculous. When that happens, what do you do? Rejoice and tell everybody. You get excited. What's going to happen? Miraculous things that are unique and special to you. Miracles in your life that you notice, receive, and then tell others.

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As we are living the supernatural life of God, what else will we receive? Why is that so important to us?

#### Read Proverbs 8: 7–18:

- <sup>7</sup> for my mouth will utter truth;  
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
- <sup>8</sup> All the words of my mouth are righteous;  
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
- <sup>9</sup> They are all straight to him who understands,  
and right to those who find knowledge.
- <sup>10</sup> Take my instruction instead of silver,  
and knowledge rather than choice gold,
- <sup>11</sup> for wisdom is better than jewels,  
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.
- <sup>12</sup> "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and I find knowledge and discretion.
- <sup>13</sup> The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.  
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil  
and perverted speech I hate.
- <sup>14</sup> I have counsel and sound wisdom;  
I have insight; I have strength.
- <sup>15</sup> By me kings reign,  
and rulers decree what is just;
- <sup>16</sup> by me princes rule,  
and nobles, all who govern justly.<sup>[a]</sup>
- <sup>17</sup> I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me diligently find me.
- <sup>18</sup> Riches and honor are with me,  
enduring wealth and righteousness.

# LESSON 2:

## WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?

He says that as you're seeking His will, which is best and none better, you need what? Wisdom, insight, and clarity. This is how we're supposed to walk. There's a specialness to that as you're seeking it together as a couple, together with your friends, together with your family, together with your inner circle. In life, things are not going to be clear to you. You don't know which way to go. God says part of the fun of life is receiving His wisdom together. With your issue, seek God together and start processing it. You're looking for an answer, which is good, and you know you're going to get that answer. The joy for us is to go find out and take it step by step. Do you see how God is working? Do you see His insight? Do you see His wisdom—together learning to enjoy the very process of receiving His wisdom? He says, *I want you to enjoy the process of receiving My wisdom.*

**What are the elements of wisdom that we will be receiving? What do these mean for our everyday lives?**

### Read Isaiah 11:1–3:

The Righteous Reign of the Branch

**11** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

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# LESSON 2:

## WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?

By definition, as we together are seeking wisdom, it's not going to be based on what we see or hear. In other words, it's not a natural logic. No, we will receive it by the Spirit who is going to give us wisdom—understanding, counsel, might, knowledge. Our thought together will be to see what God would say about this and give us wisdom that we get the privilege of receiving together. Let's process that. Let's listen, watch, wait, let's see what happens next. There's a thrill to that so that every issue you have, you don't look at it in a negative way. How do you look at it? In an exciting way. This brings about the adventure we talked about earlier. There's this expectation of, *Yes, what's He going to do now? What's He going to show us now? How is He going to show up?* It unfolds as we begin to trust Him, witness it, and bear witness to that. Our view changes from trying to figure things out on our own to processing with others see how God would bring His wisdom to us.

**As God has us experience this beautiful, spiritual life, what is the main reason He demonstrates this to us? Why is this so important?**

**Read Isaiah 42:8–9:**

<sup>8</sup> I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

<sup>9</sup> Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth  
I tell you of them.”

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## LESSON 2:

### WHAT ARE ELEMENTS OF HIS LOVE THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE IF WE WALK WITH HIM?

*He says: I'm going to reveal Myself to you step by step, purpose by purpose, issue by issue. I will demonstrate My glory. My answers are going to be supernatural. If you could go do it yourself, then you would take the glory. So, what I'm about to do is going to be demonstrating My glory. And you get the privilege of seeing it, of receiving it, and living it out—all for My glory so that I demonstrate to the world who I really am.*

Now think back to the simplicity of this. The only way He can do this is for Him to live His invisible life through us who are visible. In other words, His supernatural work has to happen in reality, in real life. It'll happen through you because you're in the physical. It's not hypothetical. It's not just in the spiritual realm. It has to actually happen in the real physical life, which you are the representation of. However, don't ever take the glory for that, which you shouldn't because you couldn't have done it without Him. There's no way you could have done it.

As we finish this lesson, we are beginning to understand the depth of His love—His love is to give us the Covenant, and it's going to be spectacular. It'll be fun. It'll be joyful. It'll be fellowship. It'll be sweet. It'll be Him delivering resolutions to our issues—supernaturally—and offering a life of adventure and excitement.



# LESSON 3: HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?



"He created us  
in His image to  
be the physical  
representation of  
the invisible God in a  
physical world."

As we continue with our course: *Love God With All Your Heart, Mind, and Soul*, we've learned that God is love, and His intention is for us to live in His love, His life through us. We're the physical representation of the invisible God. He had this grand life for us that He planned in Genesis 1 and 2—and that He gave to Adam and Eve in a perfect place. But then Satan came and appealed to them to not follow God by noting their own free will. They fell and introduced sin nature and entropy—destruction into the world. The world is now under the control of the enemy, but Christ has returned to restore that to us. He said, *I've come to give you life and give it to you super abundantly—because I so loved the world*. We now, as believers, have a choice to make. Do we want to live with God and let Him express that love through us or live away from Him, even though eternal destiny will still be with Him, we won't be experiencing the fullness of His love. We went into some of the characteristics of that—fellowship, intimacy, fun. It's the making of decisions by receiving God's wisdom—which puts us in the right place for God to perform His supernatural work in our life.

**As a follower of Christ, where have we been raised? What does that mean for how we are to live? What does it mean that God has prepared good works for us to walk in? How are we then to understand how we walk with Him?**

## Read Ephesians 2:1–10:

By Grace Through Faith

**2** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>[a]</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>[b]</sup> **4** But<sup>[c]</sup> God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

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Through grace, you have been saved. We know it's not of works, or anything we do to earn it, but through a received salvation, as you have now entered into relationship with Him. He says you've been raised. Where? With Him into the heavenly spiritual realm. One of the aspects of love is that He brings you into His spiritual dimension where the Kingdom of God is fully operational, and all His things can be delivered.

He raises you up with Him, and you now have access to Him. One of the aspects of this love is that it's His work. He goes on to say that we are His workmanship. What does that mean? When you look at somebody who is in workmanship, it's what is being created and transformed as he carries out a work designed by the Creator. The design and work are His, and we are the recipient of this work. So, whose workmanship are we? His. We're not our own. And He says, I've created and planned all this out for you, unique to you—Good works. How would you define a good work? This is different than we would define it. We think of good work as activities that we view as helpful to others or what others would consider helpful. His good work is to have us join Him in His purpose and Kingdom life in the heavenlies where we will experience what we learned in Lesson 2—the life of joy, fellowship, wisdom, supernatural, and fun with Him. He says He has created you to experience those, and it's His work that you are then to do. Walk in them. What does

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

that imply if you're walking? You're moving. You're on His path with Him to join His work. These were done in advance—the plans are already set, and our obedience is to walk into them. Who planned them out? He did. Who hasn't planned them out? Us.

The expression of love is that what He has you participate in, is going to thrill you. It's going to excite you. It's going to stimulate you as you fulfill and receive the life that He has for you. Be careful not to define it yourself—to decide on your own—that you are going to do a work for church, or a ministry, or a program. No, work is His life and all the aspects of His life as He has already defined personally, uniquely, and currently for us.

**What is our role in discovering this life of “good” work that God has prepared? What does He then promise to give us? What does that mean?**

**Read Jeremiah 33:3:**

<sup>3</sup> Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

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He says: *Would you allow Me to teach you, show you things that you don't know, that you can't figure out with your own logic. My action is to transfer the things that I know that you don't so that you can understand it and participate in it—it will be a joy for you.*

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

What does God promise as we receive His answers to our questions—things that only He knows? What is important for us to receive His answers and not be stubborn? Why?

### Read Psalm 32:8–11:

- <sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- <sup>9</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
or it will not stay near you.
- <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.
- <sup>11</sup> Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

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This gives us a great illustration. He says steadfast love is going to characterize your life. Remember, that word is Covenant loyalty. The Covenant will be executed in your life. He says: *Let Me teach, instruct, counsel, guide you into My path of life that I have planned out for you, the works that I've created.* Don't be like a mule, which is stubborn, and the only way to get them to move is to yank them with the bridle, kick them, etc. He says, *It would be way easier if you just let Me instruct you with things that you don't know and for you to have a heart to receive it.* God's heart is to keep guiding you, instructing you. It'll be very easy.

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

**What is the role of the Holy Spirit? What does that mean? What will be the promised benefit to us? What does that mean for what we can expect in our difficult lives?**

**Read Romans 8:26–28:**

**8** I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

<sup>26</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
or it will not stay near you.

<sup>27</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

<sup>28</sup> Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

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He's given us Himself through the Holy Spirit, who is resident in us, and His role is to discover God's will and then do what? Transfer that to us. Communicate that to us (go back to Jeremiah 33:3). He'll tell you great and mighty things that you don't know, but He needs you to know. So, the love is to educate, teach, guide, instruct as He delivers to us His wonderful plan for each of us personally.

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

In order to experience the promised good from God, how are we to walk with Him and receive this good? What does that look like in our everyday lives?

**Read Psalm 33:4–6; 10–12:**

<sup>4</sup> For the word of the LORD is upright,  
and all his work is done in faithfulness.

<sup>5</sup> He loves righteousness and justice;  
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

<sup>10</sup> The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;  
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

<sup>11</sup> The counsel of the LORD stands forever,  
the plans of his heart to all generations.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

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What does it say that you can have confidence in? Everything that He speaks. He's faithful to deliver what He speaks—Covenant loyalty, steadfast love, everything. He offers this to whom? All generations. It's not arbitrary, it's not once in a while. It's that He is giving everyone the opportunity to receive what He speaks and let Him fulfill what He says He's going to do, and He's faithful to that. We do not have to look at our Christian life as perhaps or maybe something good will happen. Instead, you can count on Him to guide you and lead you and tell you what He's going to do. He will do it, and He will fulfill it.

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

What further does He promise as we walk with Him? What does this mean to how we live life?

### Read Psalm 36:5–10:

- <sup>5</sup> Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the clouds.
- <sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;  
your judgments are like the great deep;  
man and beast you save, O LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- <sup>8</sup> They feast on the abundance of your house,  
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
- <sup>9</sup> For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light do we see light.
- <sup>10</sup> Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,  
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!

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He says He will provide steadfast love, mercy. What do those words mean? Covenant loyalty. I'm going to provide you the Covenant. *I'm going to bless you to make you a blessing and you can have confidence in that.* As you look at the issues of your life, His element of love is this: *Given your situation, given your issue, given your difficulty, given your wounds and patterns in your life that you're trying to overcome—you can start with and believe that I'm going to deliver the Covenant to you.* How soon can that happen? How is it going to happen? He says: *I'm not going to tell you those two things. I'm just going to tell you that it will happen, so live under belief and understanding as you walk with Me into the fulfillment of that Covenant—because I'm faithful to it in my love.*

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

**How does God deliver the Covenant to us? How does this demonstrate His love for us? Why is this so important for us?**

**Read Psalm 59:9–10; 16–17:**

<sup>9</sup> O my Strength, I will watch for you,  
for you, O God, are my fortress.

<sup>10</sup> My God in his steadfast love<sup>[a]</sup> will meet me;  
God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.

<sup>16</sup> But I will sing of your strength;  
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.

For you have been to me a fortress  
and a refuge in the day of my distress.

<sup>17</sup> O my Strength, I will sing praises to you,  
for you, O God, are my fortress,  
the God who shows me steadfast love.

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He says He is going to meet us. So, if He's meeting us, He's coming to us, when? Today. Now. He doesn't say, *Hey, I'm over here but in order for you to follow Me, you first have to do this and this and this—and get your life straightened out. Then, perhaps we can meet.* Rather, what does He say? His love for you is what? That He is going to come and meet you where you are today—where you are struggling with issues of life—difficulties, things that you have lost, discouragement—negative patterns in life. We believe that if He could just fix these certain areas of our life, then maybe God would be happy with us. But God says, *I will be happy with you if you just receive My invitation to walk with Me. I'm coming to meet you so that you can begin that journey. I'm meeting you where you are. My invitation is to walk with Me. You don't have to do anything to start that walk, just start. I'll do the work.* See the difference? Love isn't a set of obligations, or conditions, except one: Why don't you come and experience that love, and He'll meet you where you are.



# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

As we meet Him, what then will we experience? Why?

### Read Psalm 21:3–7:

<sup>3</sup> For you meet him with rich blessings;  
you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked life of you; you gave it to him,  
length of days forever and ever.

<sup>5</sup> His glory is great through your salvation;  
splendor and majesty you bestow on him.

<sup>6</sup> For you make him most blessed forever,<sup>[a]</sup>  
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts in the LORD,  
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

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He says, *As I come and meet you, you recognize that you're in My presence, and you will have great joy. Why?* Because He is going to deliver the Covenant to you. He is going to meet you with His goodness. He has a plan. He has a path. Spend time with Him in His presence. That alone brings great joy. Why? There's great affection for each other, and you know that God is going to deliver the Covenant, and it will be good, exceptional.

# LESSON 3: HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

In the following two sets of verses, what are other benefits of living in His presence? What does that then mean for what we will experience in our life? Why?

## Read Psalm 84:9–12:

<sup>9</sup> Behold our shield, O God;  
look on the face of your anointed!

<sup>10</sup> For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold  
from those who walk uprightly.

<sup>12</sup> O LORD of hosts,  
blessed is the one who trusts in you!

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He says He gives favor—no good thing will He withhold. As we start to understand His love, He's not saying, *I'm holding back so that you can prove to Me that you're worthy. And if you do the right things, maybe I'll deliver it to you.* Rather, He promises to deliver to us all the good things He has planned for us. If you walk with Him, you're going to receive these good things.

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

### Read Psalm 85:10–13:

- <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
- <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.
- <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him  
and make his footsteps a way.

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He says, *My love—all these characteristics of majesty, peace—they'll all come together for you, and I will give you all good things.* What are these good things? Material, physical, the things of life. It's the working through of your circumstances in life that He is going to make good—which will result in you living with good things. It doesn't say, *I'm only going to give you spiritual insight so that you can be spiritual.* Why would it be good to you? Why would you consider it good?

As we learn that He loves us, the expression of this love is that He wants to give us good things—for His beloved, and it's personal to you. It's unique to you. It's the things that you get thrilled about, of your fellowship, your place, your work, your family, your celebration of life. These things you will experience because it's unique to you and you get thrilled about it.

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

From the following two sets of verses: To receive His good things, what does God promise regarding the difficult things in our lives? What does this practically mean? What then shall we expect on how to face these difficulties?

### Read Isaiah 45:1–6:

Cyrus, God's Instrument

**45** Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,  
whose right hand I have grasped,  
to subdue nations before him  
and to loose the belts of kings,  
to open doors before him  
that gates may not be closed:

<sup>2</sup>“I will go before you  
and level the exalted places,<sup>[a]</sup>

I will break in pieces the doors of bronze  
and cut through the bars of iron,

<sup>3</sup> I will give you the treasures of darkness  
and the hoards in secret places,  
that you may know that it is I, the LORD,  
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
and Israel my chosen,  
I call you by your name,  
I name you, though you do not know me.

<sup>5</sup> I am the Lord, and there is no other,  
besides me there is no God;  
I equip you, though you do not know me,

<sup>6</sup> that people may know, from the rising of the sun  
and from the west, that there is none besides me;  
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

He says He'll break down walls that hinder us. Remember, we live in the world, and Jesus said, *You're going to have trouble in that world, You have things in the way—roadblocks, obstacles, an enemy that is constantly trying to throw hardships in front of you to stop you—so that you can't fulfill God's will.* But God says, *I'll just take care of these. I will blow them up. I will get rid of them.* We need not fret with our problems, that we can't get over or around this. Rather, what does He say He'll do? He will make the path through it, and it'll be level. And in that process, He's going to reveal to you secret things, only things that He knows that now you will know and participate in. This is a big aspect of God's love—a privilege for those who are loved. *You're special. You trust Me.* You have this beautiful thing from God, and it changes your perspective on all this difficulty. It's a secret that is now being revealed to us, and this secret is that the obstacle will be removed, and we will live the Covenant life. We can be assured of this.

### Read Isaiah 42:16:

<sup>16</sup> And I will lead the blind  
in a way that they do not know,  
in paths that they have not known  
I will guide them.  
I will turn the darkness before them into light,  
the rough places into level ground.  
These are the things I do,  
and I do not forsake them.

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When you can't see straight because things are a struggle and in the way, God says that He will open it up so you can see it. He will give you the resolution that will be exceptional. His love means that He has an affection for you. *How about if I change things and make things happen in your difficult life? I have the power. It's not natural, but supernatural.* Not only does He have affection for us, but He can deliver

# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

things in our life that nobody else can. And because of His love, He says, *Allow Me to do that now, so that you can rejoice*. What do you rejoice at? Things working out. He can do it.

**How does God bring this exceptional life to us? What is important for how we are to process and receive His solutions? What does that look like as we learn how to process in this way?**

### Read Jeremiah 32:37–42; Ephesians 4:1–6:

<sup>37</sup> Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. <sup>38</sup> And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>39</sup> I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. <sup>40</sup> I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. <sup>41</sup> I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

<sup>42</sup> "For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them.

### Unity in the Body of Christ

**4** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

He says that unity is the way of walking with Him—a spiritual process of coming into oneness with the Spirit to confirm together His will. His heart is to drive you to unity with the Spirit and with another fellow believer who will confirm this understanding—your spouse, small group, friends, inner circle. He'll drive you to unity as you make every effort to get to unity, not between the two of you or the group itself in negotiation or intellectual work, but rather with Him.

This goes back to how He's going to guide and lead you—into the good things that He has planned for you. He says, *I have to get you to the right place at the right time with the right people so that I can deliver My supernatural work in your life.* Unity is receiving His will together, because you have the same Spirit. He'll get you the answer 100% of the time, every time. And you can be confident of that so that you'll discover His will through unity, which He's giving you.

Think how simple this is, the Holy Spirit is checking in with the Father about what His will is. Does the Holy Spirit know His will? Yes. He knows all the things that He wants to do to guide you down the path to make these crooked places straight, to lead you into the light, to deliver the things that He wants to deliver—He knows. His role is to do what? He's to tell us. He's to tell His secrets to walk us into that place where God wants to act. This is absolute and the same Holy Spirit that is in you, in your spouse, in your friends, in your group. He'll get you the answer. You can count on it. God says, *Why don't you ask Me, and I'll get you there. Then you'll know for sure what it is you should do.*

**From the following two sets of verses, what is important for us to pursue? What does that mean? How are we to pursue this?**

**Read Zechariah 8:18–19:**

<sup>18</sup> And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>19</sup> “Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW DOES GOD'S LOVE LEAD US TO HIS GOOD, BEST AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE FOR US?

He says, *As I give you shalom—peace, I'm going to place within your heart to love truth.* Because you're seeking His will, you'll know the difference between truth and not truth.

### Read John 3:19–21:

<sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

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Who is the light? He is. He will give you understanding, truth. Pursue the truth. *I'll deliver to you the truth because I'm the light and you can count on it. As you seek it, we ask Him, What do You have to say? Give me understanding. Show me the truth—I want to learn and receive this.* He says He will give you that desire—keep with it.

**As we receive truth, how does God give us an indication that we are receiving truth versus not receiving truth? How does this work for us? Why is this so significant for us?**

### Read 1 John 3:19–24:

<sup>19</sup> By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup> for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup> and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup> And this



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is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God,<sup>[a]</sup> and God<sup>[b]</sup> in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

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He says, *As I'm leading you to unity, I'm leading you to My will, and you're seeking truth. I'm going to give you something to give you the indication—so that you know that you have received it or not quite. If you are walking with Me, your heart will condemn you.* What does that feel like, what does that look like? When you're pursuing truth and you're trying to understand what that is, you start to feel that you understand things. Then He says, *I'm going to trouble you.* This means that you don't have peace about something, you don't feel right about it. There's a sense that something isn't quite right yet. Why? Because God is troubling you—purposely, because He's trying to get you to the right path; and then you will not feel troubled but at peace, confident—receiving clarity and understanding. This, He says, is and feels beautiful. Who's guiding that? He is.

If we have not fully received this, He asks us to stay with Him a little bit longer until we get it. When we get it, He's going to give us great peace and confidence. Picture a radio when you hear static. It's not quite tuned yet. That's the issue. But you keep at it and tune it until it is clear. If you are being troubled, that's a check in your spirit. Just keep going until you see something new, some new piece of information or revelation that brings things into focus—until you know that you know that you know—the privilege of having the Father guide and lead you through the Spirit.

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How can we have assurance that we are learning truth and following God's will for us? What then are we to expect to receive, and how are we to follow?

### Read John 14:15–24:

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,<sup>[a]</sup> to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be<sup>[b]</sup> in you.

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." <sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

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He says, if you abide in Him and He in you, whose are you? His. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are going to make "their" home where? In you. His nature will be in you through the Holy Spirit. You have all of Them, you have the fullness of God in you. And He is going to transfer that to you and have you be transformed by Them. The way He is going to do it is to speak words—instruct, guide, promise. Your role is to receive it, to follow His guiding. And go on the path that He is going to have for you, that is going to be delivered to you by Him. It's not you independently

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wishing you could do better. He says, *It's not up to you. I'm putting Myself in you to have you follow what I'm going to deliver. Your role is to have a heart to go, and I'll do the work.*

In Romans 8:28, He speaks that all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose as He transforms you into His image. *My character is getting into you as you walk in life. While these things of life are getting resolved and I'm helping you understand, it's Me living in you.* Paul says, *It's no longer me who lives, but Christ who lives in me. And, it's not that I am nothing.* Paul was still the same personality—how he acted, how he functioned. But it was Christ's nature now being lived out through him—we're the physical representation of the invisible God; His nature in us, and He's transforming us, giving to us the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control. It's not fruits—but one fruit, the whole thing. All of these characteristics will start to become you as God transfers His nature to you.

**What does it mean that God establishes every good for us? How might we then receive this as we face difficulties and trouble? What does that mean we can expect as outcomes of these difficulties and troubles?**

**Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17:**

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

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What does He want to establish in you? Every good work. What's this good work? Whatever He gives us when we join Him—this is His good work. And He specifically gives us hope—encouragement and confident expectation—that His good work, His plan, is going to happen.

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When you have an issue, a difficult situation, a decision to make, God says He will establish His good work in the middle of all this. You can have hope—confidence that God will bring clarity, His good work, His will. This is one of the benefits of His love—you're always living in a state of encouragement, not discouragement. Why? Since He gives you hope, you will always be encouraged that God is bringing about His good work—particularly in stuff that's absurd, nuts, awful, or terrible. But God says, *Be encouraged. I'm going to take care of this. I love you. You do not need to wish (our definition of hope) that it works out with the thought that it probably won't—rather, have real hope, confidence that I am going to work all this out and bring My resolution—hope and expectation.*

**As God meets us and gives us hope, what does He wish to give us? Why is this so significant to how we live and receive His good work?**

## Read Psalm 21:1–7:

The King Rejoices in the Lord's Strength  
To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

**21** O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices,  
and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

<sup>2</sup> You have given him his heart's desire  
and have not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*

<sup>3</sup> For you meet him with rich blessings;  
you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

<sup>4</sup> He asked life of you; you gave it to him,  
length of days forever and ever.

<sup>5</sup> His glory is great through your salvation;  
splendor and majesty you bestow on him.

<sup>6</sup> For you make him most blessed forever;<sup>[a]</sup>  
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.

<sup>7</sup> For the king trusts in the LORD,  
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

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Now that we understand that God meets us where we are, He adds a wonderful element to this: *I'm meeting you to fulfill your desires in your heart.* This is how God created and designed you—in your nature, personality, your place in life, your spouse and/or friends, your interests. He wishes to fulfill these desires by providing things in life (real experiences) that will thrill your heart. *I'm going to resolve circumstances, have you enjoy experiences and real things, leading and guiding you with things that stimulate your heart, the seat of your desire.* Who's going to do that? He is. He'll give that to you. Don't chase it. If you chase it, you're off doing it by yourself, and you disqualified His ability to give it to you because you left His place, the Kingdom, and are no longer walking with Him. You have to be with Him. It's simple. He says, *I want to give you the desires of your heart and stimulate your heart. But there's a requirement. You have to be with Me.*

**As a disciple of Christ, what are we to learn? What is the significance of this for how we then follow Him?**

**Read Matthew 28:18–20:**

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

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He says that your purpose and your mission are to make disciples—a disciple is simply defined as a follower of Christ, one who learns to walk with Him, and receive and experience all these elements of God's love.

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So, teach them to observe what you already are experiencing. Not to be dependent on you, but to be connected to the Spirit, as He so leads you and guides you. The key element is that once we are experiencing this, you then have the ability to transfer it, inviting others to the same place. If you just talk about it, but you're not experiencing it, you can't make a disciple.

Think of all the people who followed Jesus during his three years who were called disciples. The ones who walked with Him all three years. People came in and out. They learned, but they weren't disciples. The true disciples walked with Jesus, day after day after day after day after day. They realized the life of God in real experiences. They learned to be disciples—followers of Christ. They learned that God is a faithful God. God leads us. He is the one who gets us to unity to confirm His will. This was not learned by study or learned quickly.

Your mission is to make disciples as God brings people to you. Spend time with them so that they start to learn it and receive it. What do you think God will ask of them? That they, too, go make disciples. You see how fantastic this is?

**Whose race are we to run? What is important as we run this race? What does that mean for how we then run our race?**

### Read Hebrews 12:1–2:

Jesus, Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith

**12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

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You are to run your own race, as God has set before you, unique to you. We are called to run this unique race. Your role is to listen, and follow, and fulfill it. We understand that Christ is the author and finisher of faith. What He speaks, we are called to believe—not intellectually by trying hard to believe it, rather to receive it since He will give it to us (the finisher).

Stay on that course, which you can't figure out on your own because it requires faith. You're going to have to depend on Him with the issues of life, of what you are going to do, to fulfill what He says. You have to learn to listen. Then He's going to ask you, *Do you believe it? Run the race set before you. It's unique to you.*

As you disciple people, what race do you want them to run? Their own race. So discipling isn't learning to do these certain things. Rather, you are called by God to meet them. You're walking in the Spirit, so meet them and then encourage them to walk the race that God has set before them. You will understand it and can help understand it, but it's not your race, it's their race. And that's why there is the call toward discipling.

As we end this session, we've learned that God says, *My love is Me delivering to you My nature, My capability. I'm faithful. I'm going to deliver the Covenant. I'll take care of these things. I'll transfer My nature into you. I'll guide you. I'll give you unity. I'll give you all the power to know My way, which I'm going to deliver to you.*

His love is about His power, might, joy, and characteristics being transferred into our life, and what a thrill that is.





# LESSON 4: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN AND RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE THAT PROVIDES WONDERFUL ASPECTS OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?



**"We're not forced to receive His love, but have the choice to receive this love and then remain in the intimacy of this love."**

As we continue with Lesson 4 in our course: *Love God With All Your Heart, Mind, and Soul*, we've come to understand that He is love, and He created us in His image to be the physical representation of the invisible God in a physical world. Originally God intended to have us experience the seven wonderful, exceptional things of all life—perfection. Adam and Eve then fell because of the choice they made.

In this lesson, we're going to talk about free will. Though created in the image of God, they handed over the authority of the Earth to Satan—now all of life is characterized by kill, steal, and destroy. We live in a very difficult place, and we have a sin nature that has to be redeemed. Because of God's love for us, Christ came to redeem us and said, *I've come to give you life and give it to you super abundantly—to restore to you these seven exceptional things and bring harmony back to your life in a wicked world*. We live in two places. We live in a difficult place which is in entropy, and characterized by destruction and trouble, and in God's Kingdom where He is restoring through His love, that which He's giving to us and then we express to others.

It looks like the joy of fellowship, the joy of family, the joy of intimacy with Him, the supernatural, the fun, the freedom, the joy of walking with Him. He says, *My love is to give this to you freely*. And of course, there is a condition—we have to walk with Him, which is what we're going to learn today: How do we receive it? He's given it to us, but we have to be with Him to receive it—a choice of our free will. It's not automatic. We're not robots. We're not forced to receive His love, but have the choice to receive this love and then remain in the intimacy of this love.

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**What does God set before us? What is the reason, and what are the consequences for the choice we make? How does God wish us to respond? What are the benefits of choosing so? Why is this so important for us to experience His love?**

## **Read Deuteronomy 30:11–20:**

### The Choice of Life and Death

<sup>11</sup> "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. <sup>12</sup> It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' <sup>13</sup> Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' <sup>14</sup> But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

<sup>15</sup> "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God<sup>[a]</sup> that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,<sup>[b]</sup> then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

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# LESSON 4: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN AND RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE THAT PROVIDES WONDERFUL ASPECTS OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?

God desires to give you this blessed life. He says, *It's My life. It's Me. I can fulfill it. I can give it, and I want to give this to you because I love you. You're special. In order to have that, you have to choose to receive it. You don't earn it. You just have to choose life. Who's the life? Jesus through the Holy Spirit within us. Choose walking with Him. Have an affection to receive it. Walk with Him so He can deliver it to you. Stay in the right place so that He can give it to you. Because remember, how is He going to give it to you? He says, No good thing will I withhold from you. Run the course prepared before you. It's life. It's your circumstances of life. Choose life and blessing—free will.*

**How does choosing Him mean we are loving Him? What is His heart toward you, and why does choosing Him thrill His heart?**

**Read Deuteronomy 6:4–5:**

<sup>4</sup>"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

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He says that when you choose Him, you're loving Him with all your heart, mind, and soul. Your heart—your soul—are your inner being, the place of your will, your intellect, your emotion, your personality, the essence of who you are. The essence of who you are is to choose Him by desiring to be with Him. We will have great fellowship. In His presence, you'll have great joy—just by being with Him; and then He's going to deliver all these things to you. You must be completely surrendered.

It's not a sappy feeling or a statement—rather a genuine choice to completely follow and be with Him.

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**How does Jesus define love here? How does that differ from most Christians' understanding of love? How then shall we respond to experience God's love and for us to love Him?**

## **Read Luke 11:37–12:3:**

### Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers

<sup>37</sup> While Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. <sup>38</sup> The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. <sup>39</sup> And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup> You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup> But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

<sup>42</sup> "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>43</sup> Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. <sup>44</sup> Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it."

<sup>45</sup> One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also." <sup>46</sup> And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. <sup>47</sup> Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. <sup>48</sup> So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup> Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,'<sup>50</sup> so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, <sup>51</sup> from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. <sup>52</sup> Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

<sup>53</sup> As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, <sup>54</sup> lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

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Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

**12** In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. <sup>2</sup> Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>3</sup> Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

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Jesus tells the Pharisees and lawyers that they have neglected the love of God. If we asked them, *Do you love God?*—what would they say? *Yes, sure, of course. Not only do I obviously love Him, look at what I do. Look at all the things I'm doing. I do it all correctly. And Jesus says, Woe to you. You've neglected the key, which is a heart to love God. It's not performance. It's not duty—or what the typical Christian thinks, I do all the things that the church asked me to do. And isn't that good? Doesn't that demonstrate my love? And Jesus's response to that is what? No, you've missed out of the love of God because you forgot something—your love. God first loved you and desires to transfer His life to you.*

In this story, what have they done? They've replaced relationship with obligation. He says love is enjoying the relationship. For example, if I said to my wife, Linda, *What do you want me to do for you?* and she gave me a list, I believe I will prove my love by doing this list. What have I forgotten? The relationship—just enjoying being together, understanding each other, talking, dialogue, and hearing.

Jesus further says to His disciples to beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees. Leaven is something that starts small and takes over the whole thing. Why would a focus on duty and not love affect the whole of life? Because you did not love God with your heart, but only with your intellectual response. When people are wanting to learn to hear God's voice, with that heart and the experience of the love of God, they start hearing God's voice. It's His work, not ours. Then as they're starting to hear God's voice, they tend to drift into duty, *Am I hearing it right? Am I doing it right? Am I hearing God's voice? What is the correct*

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*way to do that?* Even with this desire to be in intimate relationship, it is not our focus on doing it right, it is just to enjoy the relationship. He'll speak to you in ways that are unique to you. There's no right way to do it. Don't drift into trying to do it correctly—just enjoy His life in and for you.

**What is required of us to receive the Covenant life—the super-abundant blessed life? What do all these mean regarding how we love Him? How do we fulfill these?**

## Read Deuteronomy 10:12–13:

### Circumcise Your Heart

<sup>12</sup>“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup> and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

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God says that in order for you to enjoy the Covenant life He desires to give you, it is necessary to have a heart to follow Him. You have to be with Him. Fear Him, serve Him, love Him, do it with all your heart, mind, and soul. Stay with Him. Why? Because love in Him delivers His life to you as you walk with Him, so that you enjoy life, fellowship, unity, and preciousness. He says, *You're living in a difficult world . I understand that, and you're going to have trouble. And you have deep wounds from your childhood that need to be healed. To fulfill this, I'll give you instructions that provide the path for walking with Me.* What is the purpose of instruction? To be with Him so that He can give you these things by you being in the right place at the right time with the right people—as He so ordained. Our obedience is really then being led by the Holy Spirit. It is your choice. Receive God's best by being with Him and enjoying the walk.

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**As we walk with Him, what is our privilege? How does this stimulate Him giving us love, and us loving Him back? What is the reason for this privilege?**

**Read Ephesians 3:12:**

<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

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Through our faith in Him, while walking with Him, what do you receive? The confidence, access, access to the Spirit—to the throne room where God the Father is, who knows all the answers and is going to direct all aspects of your life. You can have confidence that when seeking His will, you are going to receive it. You are in a pickle. You've got a situation. You have a problem. We could try to go figure it out and do it ourselves, or with confidence we could go ask Him so that He can instruct us into His perfect will, His resolution that is best and none better. Why would we have a heart to use this confident access? He knows more than us. He is going to resolve this. It's not hypothetical, but is the fulfillment of this in your circumstances. We have access. We expect an answer; with boldness, we're going to say, *Would You please give us the answer?* And then we follow with obedience.

**As we love Him with all our heart, mind, and soul, what do we find our delight in? What does this mean, and why is this so important to demonstrate our love?**

**Read Psalm 119:41–48:**

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<sup>41</sup> Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD,  
your salvation according to your promise;

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<sup>42</sup> then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me,  
for I trust in your word.  
<sup>43</sup> And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,  
for my hope is in your rules.  
<sup>44</sup> I will keep your law continually,  
forever and ever,  
<sup>45</sup> and I shall walk in a wide place,  
for I have sought your precepts.  
<sup>46</sup> I will also speak of your testimonies before kings  
and shall not be put to shame,  
<sup>47</sup> for I find my delight in your commandments,  
which I love.  
<sup>48</sup> I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love,  
and I will meditate on your statutes.

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He says, *If you're going to love Me with all your heart, mind, and soul, you will find your delight in My instructions.* Why would you delight in His instruction? Because we know it's for our good. *I will give you the restoration of life, the fullness of life, the joy of life, these things that I've described to you. You have trouble. You have a real problem. Follow Me willingly, delightfully, and expect an answer; expect this to be resolved. Pursue truth. And don't listen to what is false. It's kind of tricky because the world is full of false. So, pursue truth. Jesus says in John 14, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. I am the truth. So, pursue Me, pursue the truth through the Holy Spirit who is going to guide you into all truth.*



# LESSON 4: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN AND RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE THAT PROVIDES WONDERFUL ASPECTS OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?

**As we seek His instruction to demonstrate our love, what are we to pursue?  
How do we receive truth? What does this mean to how we process with Him?  
Why?**

**Read John 18:37–38:**

<sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."<sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

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*Jesus said, I've come to bear witness to the truth—because I am the truth. I know it all. I've come to bear witness to that. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. My role is to relay the truth to you, and your role is to pursue the truth. And how will you do that? It's really simple, hear what He has to say.*

In this situation, Pilate spoke a question—What is truth?—that ended the conversation because he did not really ask a question, but made a statement—There is no truth. Jesus said that because you do not have a heart to pursue truth, this stops the process. He also said that He is not going to chase you, to force you to receive it. Do you have a heart to go? Everyone who hears who has a heart to hear truth is going hear His voice. Why? God will deliver the truth, the truth of your situation and all that God wants to do.

# LESSON 4: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN AND RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE THAT PROVIDES WONDERFUL ASPECTS OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?

From the following two sets of verses, what do we need to be careful of? How are we to understand the difference between truth and false? Why is this so important in our experience of God's love?

## Read Deuteronomy 13:1–4:

**13** "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,<sup>2</sup> and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,'<sup>3</sup> you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.<sup>4</sup> You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

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## Read 1 John 4:1–6:

Test the Spirits

**4** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.<sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,<sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.<sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.<sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.<sup>6</sup> We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

# LESSON 4: WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN AND RECEIVING GOD'S LOVE THAT PROVIDES WONDERFUL ASPECTS OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?

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He says, *You are to test the spirits—you are to evaluate what you're hearing, since there are many voices trying to speak to us—even from other Christians, even from theologians. Your role is to hear it from Me through the Holy Spirit.* Does He know truth? Yes. He is the truth. It's not fuzzy for Him. If it's not true and you have a heart to test the Spirit and hear from Him, what will He do? He already told us—He'll trouble you. We will evaluate how things line up. Is that really true? How do we understand that? You're not paying attention solely to what somebody else says, but rather you are going to the Spirit and letting Him guide you, and lead you into truth.

Your role is to test things that you're processing, what you're hearing and evaluating. You have the Holy Spirit. Go to God and see what He has to say. And you'll know the truth because He will deliver the truth. If it's uncomfortable for you, that's no problem, as He is using the troubling as we test it to then understand the truth. Test every spirit, which draws you into the abiding—to stay with Him in our abiding relationship to pursue and receive truth. The word is powerful, and He is able to give us His answer. With boldness and confidence, we have the privilege to go to Him and pursue that answer.

**As we further understand delighting in His instruction, what does that lead us to? What does that mean for how we live? In what way does this characterize what is said about you? Why?**

## **Read Psalm 40:6–10:**

<sup>6</sup> In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,  
but you have given me an open ear.<sup>[a]</sup>

Burnt offering and sin offering  
you have not required.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, "Behold, I have come;  
in the scroll of the book it is written of me:

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<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God;  
your law is within my heart.”

<sup>9</sup> I have told the glad news of deliverance<sup>[b]</sup>  
in the great congregation;  
behold, I have not restrained my lips,  
as you know, O LORD.

<sup>10</sup> I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;  
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;  
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness  
from the great congregation.

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David says, *May it be written of me that I delight in God's will—delight to seek Him, delight to pursue truth. Delight to be with God because His will is best and none better.* And by following His will, we will receive these fantastic things of life that God promises to deliver. It is not about all the things we decide to do in life, even what we would consider worthy things, but instead asking ourselves if we are faithful in following the will of God so that God can deliver to us what His life is about. This is the Covenant—He's going to bless you to make you a blessing.

We then are to give it away. Remember our giving it away is to give to those who have a heart to receive the blessing, and to not worry about those who do not. For those who do not, you are to dust your feet off and move on. Don't worry, there's plenty of people lining up around the block ready to receive what He has to say—who have a heart for truth. And you don't tell them the answer. Why? Because you can't. You don't have a clue what their life's all about. You don't have answers for them, but you know Who does. Help them get connected to God directly so that they hear His voice, they pursue truth and His will, and then receive the Covenant life—blessed to be a blessing so they, too, can give it away. See how beautiful this is?

As we learned in Ephesians 2:10, He has prepared the good works that we are to walk in. It's about what we're going to go through because we're the physical

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representation of the invisible God. His love is going to flow through you as He so directs—to spouses, to kids, grandkids, friends, people who God brings across your path—the joy and beauty of delighting to do His will.

**As we pursue love, what else are we to pursue? How do you define this? What does this look like as we engaged with others in our personal community—spouse, family, friends, small group? Why is this such a special privilege?**

## Read 1 Corinthians 14:1–3:

### Prophecy and Tongues

**14** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup> For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

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The prophetic is twofold: foretelling, which is receiving revelation about something in the future; and forthtelling, which is truth telling about what God is speaking to you in this situation now. God has a word for you, some input for you. These always have one to three qualities—if it is truly from God and not someone's own idea or agenda.

1. Edification
2. Encouragement or comfort
3. Exhortation

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You are being used by God to be His messenger to someone—our role in the body—and both to be used as a messenger and also as a receiver. We are being asked to assist a fellow believer toward being with God and experiencing His love. Some things we might ask, *Are you on the path of God? Are you seeking God? Do you understand His will?* In the middle of problems and difficulties, we are confirming that God is going to answer this issue. God is going to resolve this issue. Don't lose heart. Don't get discouraged. I'm going to stand with you, and I'm going to believe with you, so let's go together. And by the way, here's a verse that God has for you.

Many years ago, we had a serious business issue. We had been very successful, and then we had a situation where it wasn't working. It was traumatic, including potentially causing us to lose our whole business. One of our friends and fellow Living Waters leaders, Dave Dunkel, called me and said that he had been praying about this and he received that God's Word regarding this situation was a chapter in 1 Kings. I read it, and it described the whole thing. Exactly. I was part of the cause of the problem. It was through neglect. I assumed certain things, and I wasn't paying attention and paid the price. My initial thought was that I was going to fix the problem. And it worsened. This is the same situation as with David. God says, *Why don't you just let Me do this, and I'll show you step by step by step. Don't you go do anything until you know what I am going to do.*

Dave gave me the Word that he had received from God for me—prophetic. *As part of your walking with Me, I'm going to use you to be prophetic, to speak to other people, which will encourage them, and comfort them, and exhort them, and build them up.* And then always be willing to receive this from others—they are going to be speaking into your life, so be willing to hear and receive. That's the way the body works, and that's God expressing His love to you.

What does that do for your fellowship? Makes it sweeter. You rejoice. And this is fulfilled then through unity. We read in Ephesians 4:1–6, to do everything you can to get to the unity of the spirit. In Psalm 133, we learned that blessed are those who dwell in unity because there God commands blessings. Who do you want around you to pursue unity? People who are abiding, who are hearing God's voice and can confirm through the Spirit the unity of His will. Because your unity isn't with each other, it's with the Spirit. God wants people around Him who serve in this prophetic role: *Are you abiding? Are you hearing? Are you understanding? And would you go with us to confirm God's will?* That's the beauty of unity. We are led to discover and follow God's will—best and none better.

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As we experience God's love, what does He promise? What does that mean? Why is this so significant as we face difficulties and life's troubles?

## Read Proverbs 25:12–15:

- <sup>12</sup> Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold  
is a wise reprovener to a listening ear.
- <sup>13</sup> Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest  
is a faithful messenger to those who send him;  
he refreshes the soul of his masters.
- <sup>14</sup> Like clouds and wind without rain  
is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give.
- <sup>15</sup> With patience a ruler may be persuaded,  
and a soft tongue will break a bone.

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He says, *As you fear Me* (remember, fearing is having a heart to walk with Him), *I'll make known to you My Covenant*. His role is to make known the Covenant—He's going to bless you to make you a blessing. Now, when it says *make known*, what does that mean? It's going to be manifested in reality—you'll experience it in your real circumstances. He's going to make known to you His Covenant.

In the middle of trouble, difficulty, we will learn to view things differently, as though we were on an adventure. We can expect Him to make known the Covenant. Why? Because He promises that He is going to deliver it to you, and He is going to do this now. We don't need nor likely will know how He does this, especially since it is supernatural and not within the scope of our logic or sight. Usually, it is God saying that He is going to surprise you. And it's a thrill. You get excited because He promises the Covenant and the path to walk into the Covenant—as troubled as it may seem.

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Knowing that He will deliver the Covenant because of His love for us, what is important in order for us to receive it? What does that mean? Why is this such a critical part of the process?

## Read Psalm 27:13–14:

<sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look<sup>[a]</sup> upon the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living!

<sup>14</sup> Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

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We are to believe He will deliver the Covenant, and thus we are to wait for this to be fulfilled. The word *wait* literally means *dance with Me*. Let Him lead, you follow. You are moving. Waiting isn't passive. He's not asking you to stand there and do nothing. You need to walk with Him, waiting on His answers and His direction, He is putting you in the right place so that it can be fulfilled. You know that you can't do anything on your own as the leader.

As we finish this lesson, God is asking us to consider loving Him with all our heart, mind, and soul. Are you in? Are you all in? Will you follow Him because His will is best and none better? He is going to answer our questions. He is going to deliver the Covenant. He is going to give us good things and our role is simply to go with Him. And as we do, we will be rewarded, and that'll demonstrate our love for Him because we believe it. We give glory to God because we trust Him completely. Why would we not walk with Him?



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**"We're not forced to receive His love, but have the choice to receive this love and then remain in the intimacy of this love."**

As we finish our course, *Loving God With All Your Heart, Mind, and Soul*, we've processed numerous insights: God is love; we first are able to love because He first loved us; He even gave His Son for us. Why? Originally, He created us in His image to be the physical representation of the invisible God. We were going to be manifesting who God was on a physical Earth that He had created, which was beautiful. It was perfect. Everything about it was exceptional. And of course, Adam and Eve had the choice of free will as was expressed in the instruction to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If they ate of that tree, they would surely die—which they did. The spiritual, perfect connection to God died, and they separated themselves from God with a sin nature—a self-centered nature—and handed over the authority to Satan.

So now our world is wicked with lots of trouble. God said, *You disobeyed and changed the nature of your relationship to Me and the nature of the perfect world to one of kill, steal, and destroy.* Since we could not earn His love because this requirement was perfection, He sent His only begotten Son, who went to the cross on His own volition, His nature of love was resurrected so that He could demonstrate to us the opportunity to have a relationship with Him again through our belief.

He further says, *I've come to give you life and give it to you abundantly. I want to extend My love now to you, to restore all of life back to the original condition*—which we know won't be perfect because we are in a world of trouble with a sin nature and self-centeredness. We went through all the descriptions of His beautiful love and what it represents in the way He wants us to live, to enjoy Him and enjoy life. He promises to deliver that to you. His love is standing firm and is constant and is faithful. The Covenant will be certain—to bless you, to make you a blessing and have you enjoy Him, so that He can enjoy you.

We processed our role, which is to surrender our will, have a heart to follow Him, walk with Him, not to perform for Him, but rather to be a receiver. And by enjoying the walk with Him, He's going to ask you to give the same to others. It's part of the Covenant. He's going to bless you to make you a blessing. Giving it away is the expression of love. He wants you to love others

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now. He wants you to love others like He does, not our sappy definition of love, which tends to be just acceptance—making sure they never feel bad, making sure they're always happy, rescuing them, putting up with their opposition to us. He says love for a believer walking with Him is different than that.

**As we are having a heart to love others—a significant part of our commands from Christ—what is necessary for us to be able to truly love others? What does that mean? Why is this so important to the process of us fulfilling His command to love others?**

**Read 1 John 5:1–3:**

Overcoming the World

**5** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

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He says, that in order to love others, you must first love God. You are called to love God with your whole heart and mind and soul; and so, you are importantly in relationship with God on His path. He then asks us, *Are you in relationship with Me on My path where I can extend My love to you and others, through making you a blessing?*

As you are a receiver of His love and are following Him on His path for you, what do you then do? Obey His instruction. What does that mean? For you to love somebody else, you have to get your instruction from God. That's the difference. That's the key. He's going to show you how to love by living in the Covenant and inviting others to experience the Covenant. In order for us to experience His love,

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what do we have to do? Choose to walk with Him to be a receiver. Why would you think that He would ask you to love anybody else differently? You have to be in the same place He is. That's why He says that if you're going to love others, you're to be like a sheepdog.

The sheepdog gives its attention to the Shepherd and gets its assignments from the Shepherd, which is directed toward the sheep. The sheepdog then willingly and excitedly does the task assigned to it. Then what does it do? It comes back to the Shepherd and asks, *Now what?* The sheepdog's heart is not focused on achievement of any outcome—in fact, the intended outcome is often not fulfilled since the sheep are stubborn and return to doing what they want, thus, ignoring the work of the sheepdog. The sheepdog comes back and jumps in the air to get eye level: *Wow. I love being with You. My joy is You. Now what? What do I get to do? Those sheep did not respond, but I did what You asked.* The affection is coming from the Shepherd and the sheepdog serving the Shepherd—who is the One who decides how to serve the sheep. Does the sheepdog decide? No. The Shepherd says, *I have My next plan; I know what I am doing. Just follow My plan, and you will love them by loving Me and following Me.*

See how amazing that is? The Shepherd doesn't give the sheepdog the next three commands. Just the next one—*Do this one, and be thrilled because you are loving Me, relating to Me, understanding Me, and carrying out My assignment that is fulfilling My love for the sheep. And so, you are loving the sheep—not based upon what you have decided but according to how I wish to love the sheep.*

**As we consider loving others, list the known elements of what it means to have our heart and actions toward others? How do we fulfill this? Why is this list so important to how we live this out?**

### **Read Leviticus 19:10–18:**

<sup>10</sup> And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>11</sup> “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. <sup>12</sup> You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

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<sup>13</sup> “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. <sup>14</sup> You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup> “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. <sup>16</sup> You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life<sup>[a]</sup> of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

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When you look at that list, what does it say? Be righteous. Do the right thing. Let God give you His righteousness. Treat people with respect and honor. Don't be manipulating. Be truthful, fair, generous, equitable. That's God's heart. And, you're receiving the nature of Christ in you because that's His heart toward you. It's the essence of the heart, not the form of it, not you deciding, not determining your way in the flesh, but rather—do you have a heart to see them as He sees them, which is based on truth—His love.

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As we carry out love, what are the characteristics that we are to experience that we then can offer to others? What does this look like in our practical lives? How does this demonstrate that we are loving others?

### Read 1 Corinthians 13:1–13:

#### The Way of Love

**13** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,<sup>[a]</sup> but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

<sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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As we have already discussed, it's all about our heart. If you're living in righteousness, peace, and joy in His Kingdom, first of all, your will is to surrender to Him. And because of that, you are, by definition, living in righteousness, peace, and joy—and you can offer that to others as so directed by God. Don't be selfish. Don't be judgmental. Don't be self-centered. Don't decide how you want somebody to operate. Rather, have a heart of honor and respect and express the very essence of His nature who is in you. The characteristics of love are gentle, kind, hopeful, believing, rejoicing. Remember, we love because He first loved us. You can't mechanically do that. You are experiencing His love that you then can express to others because you have His heart toward them.

God's heart and will are that no one would perish, but He invites people to receive Him, He does not force them. He created in His image, which includes free will. It's the very essence of God, Himself, who does not violate His creation's free will, but rather invites us to choose to live out life as He so planned. But we have to decide. Our role is to join Him in His love, operating in Him, and then loving others in the same way—truth, invitation, respect, honor. As you do that, you're serving others, and this will particularly have an impact on the body of Christ.

**What is the purpose of being called to love others? How do we fulfill this in practical ways? What does that mean as to how we are then to live?**

### **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11:**

#### Spiritual Gifts

**12** Now concerning<sup>[a]</sup> spiritual gifts,<sup>[b]</sup> brothers,<sup>[c]</sup> I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to

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another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

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He says, *All of you will receive the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.* In essence, all of these gifts will be given to us at various times, and it's always for the purpose of building up the body to assist each other in their walk with God. This is so that everyone can enjoy the Covenant—to have sweet fellowship because we're experiencing His work. Why? Because we're all walking with Him, and we're exercising the gifts He's given to us to give away.

Do you have a heart to do that? By definition, you can't be self-centered. If you don't have a heart to do it, you're saying you don't really care. You just want to try to live your own life and get blessed yourself. But God says, *I'm asking you to manifest My gifts given through you to give to others as I do My supernatural work in the body. I will be asking you to have the gift of healing, or prophetic, or any of the myriad of My supernatural gifts as listed here.*

We must further understand that the gifts are not permanent, meant only for us as our gift. It's really simple. He listed amongst the gifts, a gift of faith, but He makes a statement in Hebrews that without faith, it's impossible to please God. Thus, who has to conform to that? Everybody. So, wait a second, everybody has to have faith to live a life of God? So, this manifestation is not just your personal gift, but rather a manifestation of faith for a specific situation, a specific time to serve the body. It is the manifestation of faith for another person. You are to go to them and say, *I believe what God has said; it's going to happen because He says it.* Do you have a heart to be part of that? Do you have a heart to serve the body? What is the purpose of it? You are being called by God to assist them in walking with God, experiencing God, and enjoying the Covenant.

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How do I make sure I do not neglect loving others by doing good? What does that mean then for how I do good? Why is this so important?

### Read Hebrews 13:16:

<sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

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Don't neglect to do good. Share what you have received from God. It's not just about money. We'll share that, too, but it also includes insight, wisdom, and time. *I can come be with you. What do you need here? Let me help you.* Your heart is generous out of a flow of what you are being given. You have received freely, so give freely. Be a flow through—your heart is completely open and thrilled to do everything as He so designs.

We experienced this last year at Christmas. Linda and I were at Walmart buying a few things for our grandkids. She saw this little boy in the aisle looking at a toy. His dad came over to him and told him that he could not have that toy because they did not have the money for it. The kid was on the floor crying when Linda came to me, *Rich, God is calling us to do something for that kid.* I agreed, *Yeah, sure, absolutely. What do you want to do?* She said, *I want to buy him that toy.* I told her that was great, to go ahead and get it and talk to the boy's dad. With the toy in hand, she asks the dad if it is ok if we buy this for his boy. He said *no*, but Linda said, *It is our privilege to do this*, and he accepted. The boy was thrilled. Behind him, his brother is watching all of this unfold. When we finish and go out in the parking lot, God tells Linda, *You didn't take care of his big brother. Go back there and do something for that brother.*

They were already out of the store and were walking to their car, so Linda ran over there and said to the brother, *Come on in. You want something, too, don't you? You should have seen his eyes light up when she told him to go pick out what*



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he wanted. He was thrilled. What a joy to experience God's heart of generosity. It was flowing out of Linda through her heart of generosity at that moment—it was the manifestation of the Spirit. It was a pure gift, because God said, I want you to be generous—at this moment. And it flows from you because You have a heart to give it away. He will let you know when and how.

**Since loving others means more than just doing things, what is important for us to truly love others? What does this mean for us? Why is this so important?**

### Read Micah 6:8:

<sup>8</sup> He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,<sup>[a]</sup>  
and to walk humbly with your God?

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What does God require of you? Make sure that you're acting out of justice because He is love, kindness, *mercy*. Hebrew for mercy is Covenant loyalty. As God is loyal to the Covenant, He is asking us to walk with Him humbly—have a heart to follow and manifest His will—so that He can use us to be the physical representation of the invisible God. Our heart is to always be loyal to the Covenant and invite others to come and enjoy the Covenant, as well.

Do you have compassion when they're a little bit upset or when they are operating in the flesh or they're struggling or they're troubled. Have a heart to help them through this and experience the Covenant. In doing this, you start seeing people differently. If they choose not to follow Him, He'll tell you to dust your feet off, and don't worry about it. It's not about you forcing them or to keep chasing

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them down. Rather, it is about you. Do you have compassion to offer them the opportunity, which, then they have the free will to choose? You can't choose for them—that's not your job and not your burden. But, are you willing to offer it? He says that as you do that, you're going to make disciples who will walk with Him.

**God calls us to pass love along by our priority of what? What does this look like in practical ways in our lives? Why is this such an important element of love?**

### Read 2 Timothy 2:1–2:

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

**2** You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,<sup>[a]</sup> who will be able to teach others also.

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Disciple faithful men and women who are trustworthy—willing to learn to live in God's love, receive God's love, and then be willing to give it away. It's the flow through that keeps going as part of being a disciple. You're teaching them to give it away; you know something about that. In order for them to give it away, what must they do? They have to receive it. Don't get things backwards—it is not a life of *doing* as we think is good, but rather *giving away* what we are receiving from God—the discipling multiplies as the ones we disciple then also give it away.

Interestingly enough, as you're giving it away, what happens to you? You begin receiving it at a deeper level—even as you continue to give it away. This fills us with life, energy, and joy. As soon as you stop that—stop giving it away—the flow stops, and your tank goes empty. One of the key indicators that we are in this flow through is whether or not you're enjoying it? If you're enjoying it, you're thrilled to receive God's gift and are experiencing the joy of giving it away—which is God's plan for all of us.

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We are called to walk these faithful men and women into the life that you've been walking in. *I know God. I know I'm special. I'm in fellowship. I have joy and gladness. I have fun, I have freedom. I live in the Covenant, I experience the supernatural, and I receive wisdom, all for His glory—and I experience this because I am with Him in the Kingdom, where I have surrendered to Him, where I am dependent on Him. He made me alive in Him. I am His workmanship. He teaches me that He's faithful to deliver. He meets me, gives me all good things, make things happen, leads me to unity, gives me a heart for truth—love. He transfers to me His nature and fulfills desires. It gives me a sense of purpose, which is to give away His love.*

Then He says, *It's your free choice. Are you all in? Are you abiding and praying in My name? Are you pursuing truth? Are you delighting to do My will? Are you walking with Me? Are you experiencing the prophetic? Are you pursuing an agreement in unity? Do you believe the Covenant? Are you willing to wait for Me to show you the answer?*

As God so directs, teach them these truths, and over time they will receive them and then pass them along—and the multiplication happens to their marriages, their children, to their small group, etc. And you get to be the “parent” of that big, big, big family. You disciple a couple of people, and then they do the same. It is a multiplying effect. That's what the church is missing. Churches are looking primarily to see how big they can grow the congregation. Rather, true ministry is to disciple—receive the life of God and give it away. It's not that complicated, and it's not connected to you. It's connected to God, and you get the joy of this.

As you do that, He says, you're going to have some difficulty because not all people willingly desire to have the joy you have. Many are going to be in deep conflict, opposition, and struggle. How come? Because they are self-centered people who aren't walking with God. By definition, they are at enmity against God. They can't please God. They're not receiving God's love. They're struggling. They want, they want, they want, and they don't care about you. Unfortunately, this is not limited to unbelievers. But God will resolve this conflict for you. His heart is always to bring those who have a heart to receive joy and peace—to live in His love and His peace—and then to give it away. He will resolve every relationship you have. *Resolving* means you'll have clarity about where the relationship stands and your role in it. It's then resolved—perhaps not reconciled but resolved to bring you to freedom and release.

Jesus gave us a great example. When He first started His ministry, He had between two and four hundred people following Him because it was exciting, miraculous, even fantastic. He said, *You have to eat My body and drink My blood.* And they said, *What? We've been following a crazy person. This is nuts, crazy. We're leaving, we're going.* Did Jesus chase them down? No, He let them go. His invitation of love was for them to have a heart to receive. At that moment, they had no clue what He just said. He would have wanted them to continue in the relationship by

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seeking to learn, *This is hard for us to understand. Could You help us by explaining what this means?*

His heart was to have them keep going and seek further truth. Here, a couple hundred people chose to leave. When Jesus turned to His disciples and asked if they, too, wanted to leave, they said, *We don't know what You just said, either, but we've decided to stay with You.* He was resolved in the relationship with those who left—but He was not reconciled. They walked away. But He was resolved because it was their choice. His attention is going to anybody who wants to stay with Him—resolution always.

**As an important element of loving others, what is one of our roles? What does an ambassador do? How is this carried out? What does that mean for how we serve in this way?**

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:13–20:

<sup>13</sup> For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. <sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup> and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

<sup>[a]</sup> The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling<sup>[b]</sup> the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

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He says, *Your role is to be an ambassador.* What does an ambassador do? It represents the nation, the king, the country—therefore your instructions come from your leader. As you represent your leader, you are the messenger of what the leader wants and speaks; and as an ambassador for God, you're representing Him and are the visible expression of the invisible God.

What is God offering? An invitation to those in our circle, along our path who are willing to process truth so that they can experience the Covenant. That's our mission. You're an ambassador for Him who's offering the Covenant to them. They must connect to Him, not to you. You're just a representative. You're the messenger.

Don't regard people in the flesh—when they anger or oppose you, or cause you trouble. Instead, offer to everybody, regardless of where they stand with you personally, the Covenant at all times. We are not responsible for the response or the outcome of that invitation. Our role is only to be an ambassador. And, if you're an ambassador, what must be true of you? You've got to be with God, experiencing the Covenant. Otherwise, you're disqualified as an ambassador. If you are disqualified, what do you have to offer? Nothing.

Further, if an ambassador is sent to a country that becomes unsafe and dangerous, and the people of that nation are preparing to storm the embassy, what does the country do? They pull them out, bring them home. He cares about you. So, if it's unsafe for you, He brings you home. You're the ambassador, not the leader. Just the messenger without the burden of the outcome.

**What is God's purpose in our loving others? Why? How do we then participate in this?**

### Read 2 Corinthians 13:11:

Final Greetings

<sup>11</sup> Finally, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another,<sup>[b]</sup> agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

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Be at peace, attempt to go to one mind, live in harmony. Bring restoration. That's what He's asking you to be the ambassador for. It all depends on the choices of others around you, but it's about your heart. Are you at peace? Are you living in unity? Are you having a heart to be with God and living in harmony, one mind?

Romans 14 and 15 gives a whole discussion about being an ambassador. If you are an ambassador, don't lay your stuff on other people, your rules, your judgments—for example, in order for you to be part of our group, you must conform. And, on the other side of it, don't let people put their things upon you and lay their stuff on you. You don't need to live that way. What have you decided? You have decided how you're going to live. Your invitation is for them to enjoy the Covenant, which is primary. Are you enjoying the Covenant? This is especially important when we know something is not that clear. You might have an opinion, but you are not absolute about it, and even though another person is believing something that is not absolute in scripture, it doesn't bother you. You are not going to let them impact you, to lay on you what you have already decided is not absolute. God says His heart is to have us live in freedom and not let rules dominate us. Don't work at dominating people by creating your own rules.

**Others who we are called to love—including ourselves—are burdened and heavy laden. How do we love others to release these burdens and heaviness? What does that mean for the process into which we are called to love others? Why?**

### Read Matthew 11:28–30:

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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You who are heavy laden with heavy burdens, cast your burden on God. Tell Him what's bothering you, why you are hurting. Explain the burden and cast it upon Him—let Him be responsible for the outcome. Trust the resolution to Him, so it does not bother you anymore. As you learn this, you are asked to help others do the same. Teach them that when they are heavy laden with burdens, to cast those burdens upon God who will bring resolution and lift the burden with real Covenant experiences. But if they don't want to take that step, you are not to take on their burden.

When you are discipling, you are going to have all kinds of people looking for some help. God says to help them out by teaching them to cast their burdens on Him and live in the Covenant. Ask them if they want to follow God. If they do not, you still can encourage them, saying, *If you would just do this one thing, your whole life is going to change, and you're going to experience the Covenant and God's resolution to your burden.* But because of their free will and view toward God, they won't do it. God says don't take on their outcome. It's not your burden—dust your feet off. Let it go. Relax. Move on as you are not responsible for their choices. So don't take on that burden. If it goes farther and they are opposing or coming against and/or hurting you, it is important to process through with God to His resolution for you—to take you to freedom.

**One element of life is hurt and anger regarding how people are treated, which is a primary ingredient to burden and heaviness. How do we understand and receive forgiveness? Why is this so important to releasing the burden and heaviness?**

### Read Romans 8:1–2:

Life in the Spirit

**8** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you <sup>[b]</sup> free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

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We are reminded that forgiveness is having the heart of God in us—His nature, which is forgiveness—purely on the same basis that He forgave us. We deserve His wrath and anger, but on His own nature, He forgave us and released the requirement to be perfect. When we receive this and have it within us, we're no longer angry, bitter, upset. What they did was unjust, and anger was justified, but God says, *Release it because I'm going to help you resolve this. I will resolve it. I'll take care of it—not you. First, go to forgiveness, which I've done at the cross on the same basis. You've been forgiven.* Do you deserve His forgiveness? No. Do these people who just hurt you deserve your forgiveness? No. But you can forgive them as He has done—on His nature. (Remember, it is not reconciliation—that requires two parties to process in truth.)

**As we process our anger and hurt because of what others have done to or against us, what is important to how we address this process? What does that mean for us and how we carry this out? Why is that so important for us in this process?**

### Read Ephesians 4:25–26:

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

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Be angry and do not sin. It is ok to be angry—as it is a normal part of our nature and God's nature. They're hurting you. They're opposing you. They're in conflict with you. So anger is deserved. But first, as we learned, God calls us to go to forgiveness and get our heart right with God—forgive them on the same basis we have been forgiven. Of course, we all deserve His wrath, His anger, but He, according to His nature, forgave us. We are to have the same heart, so we can then go to the next phase—discuss truth toward resolving the injustice.



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We are to speak truth and invite them to speak the truth. Tell them they have hurt you or that they are opposed to you. Or this business deal isn't working because they are being unfair. They are unjust. Discuss this with them. See if you can work it out together—sticking to the truth to come to true reconciliation. We have forgiven, but we still need to have this relationship resolved—where either we deal with the truth and come to a satisfaction of the injustice (by us speaking and processing the truth, and inviting the offending party to do the same) or move on with no reconciliation because the other party is not willing to process at all, or does not process the truth but denies and accuses since they do not care about true reconciliation—staying prideful and in their self-centeredness.

What is love? Processing the truth with the heart for us first to resolve all our relationships to be able to live in freedom, and then continue to invite others to live in the Covenant. This is determined by their heart to process with you, and it is why those of us who are living in the Covenant are always willing to live in forgiveness, in God's nature—and to process the truth, even if we are the offending party. This is the life of the Covenant. Let's understand how we are to process when we cannot get to reconciliation.

**How are we to handle people who have angered, hurt, or opposed us who are not willing to process truth—and basically do not care? What is important for us in releasing the burden of this difficult relationship? Why is this so critical in our ability to carry out God's love?**

### Read Romans 12:9–20:

Marks of the True Christian

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit,<sup>[a]</sup> serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.<sup>[b]</sup> Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it<sup>[c]</sup> to

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the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."<sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

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You're living in the Covenant. So as far as you're concerned, you are to be at peace with everybody, which means you're in shalom. You can thus offer that shalom—even when somebody is coming against you, opposed to you, hurting you, unjust to you. They are not willing to process this with you or they say they do, but just blame you and don't really get to the truth.

God says, *It is good that you've made an offer of reconciliation, but they've rejected it. So, get out of the way. Because My wrath is going to come against them, and it's for sure—because of the Covenant. Vengeance is Mine, not yours.* You don't have to take care of this. Release the burden. You don't have to have this outcome be according to what you think should happen. Rather, you are to have proper perspective. It's unjust, and justice is going to be served—by God and not by you. So, God's love is for you to release it. Remember, He says the reason for this is the Covenant. *I'm going to bless you to make you a blessing. I'm going to bless those who come alongside of you and work things out. I'm going to curse those who curse you—those who aren't willing to come and work it through; those who don't care and keep hurting you. Guess what? They're cursed. Why? Because He cares about you, and you're His blessed child because you're walking with Him. Because they are not, they are rejecting you. When they reject you, who are they really rejecting? They're rejecting Him.*

He can live with not being reconciled, which is always with a heart to repent, seeking God, seeking truth and being willing to set things right. He can't do anything different than that. And so you, too, are to be in that same place and live with not being reconciled. Let it go. The only remedy is for them to repent. That's how you bless them. You have a heart that they would repent and then be

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restored in the Kingdom life because of the wonderful nature of God that invites them to repent and receive the life of the Covenant.

This is always His heart and His invitation. We are not to remain angry and burdened by them, but we are to pray for them—that they would repent because that's the reversal of the curse. As soon as they do—if they do—even if it is six months later, they wake up and say, *You know what? I'm really sorry. I repent.* What does God say to them at that point? *Welcome back. I'm going to restore and fix everything you did. Even though you experienced the curse—things becoming more difficult—and had negative consequences, now, because you repented, I'm going to reverse the curse and bless you.* Your heart should then rejoice. Hallelujah!

Don't get caught up in all that stuff that happened to you. God says, *Learn not to remain in anger and seek your own justice, but rather trust Me as I have you live in the Covenant.* Do you have a heart to enjoy life? What is He going to do? He is going to resolve every relationship—even the difficult ones that are not willing to go to reconciliation and set things right with you. He cares about you. Don't worry, He wants you to live in peace, in freedom, and in joy.

As we know, one of the key aspects of God's love is that He will resolve every relationship you have so that you can live in the beauty of the Covenant. None of the stuff that happens to you by self-centered people is going to distract you and draw you away from the life of the Covenant.

As we finish our course, it's really simple—love God with all your heart, mind, and soul. This is about receiving and living in His love for you. *Are you receiving My love? I am love. All of Me is love. Are you walking with Me? Are you receiving it with a heart to let Me give you the blessing of life? The Covenant. I will bless you to make you a blessing in a very difficult place. Yes, you have problems. Yes, you have people against you. Yes, I understand all these things, but I will resolve them all.*

The key is to have a heart to love Him—with everything you are—heart, mind, and soul. Love is a heart for God. It is going with Him and following His instruction. Because He is love, you have a heart for all to experience the Covenant, and you know the truth of what is needed for others to be invited and to experience it. As we are experiencing God's love, we are called to give it away. Some people will accept us giving it away to them—God's offer of life—and some won't. Guess what? He'll resolve that still so that you continue to live in His Kingdom, in the life of the Covenant so that you enjoy freedom, peace, and go deeper in His heart of love. He asks us, *Are you enjoying the fullness of life? Are you enjoying My love? Receive My love, and then love Me with all your heart, mind, and soul.*