



# Light from the Word

## Love One Another: The Great Commandment

**Editor's Note:** The Bible uses the term "one another" multiple times and it is clear God is very interested in our relationships. Jesus taught that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In 2018, we will look at several of the "one anothers" in the Bible.

*"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"*

Most of us are familiar with the second greatest commandment that Jesus and the Apostles taught us, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* This familiar scripture is quoted directly from an Old Testament passage; however, in the New Testament Jesus raises His expectation of our degree of love with His commandment: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."* Jesus demonstrated His love towards us by His tremendous sacrifice on the cross in our stead. By this we understand that our Lord expects us to not only love one another as ourselves, but also to achieve the higher plane of a sacrificial love. Sacrificial love, is a form of charity, and is defined in more detail in the familiar Love chapter, *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."* This level of love "never fails." It is to be unconditional and enduring regardless of the circumstances around us.

The Bible contains many relevant examples of the application of this level of love. Joseph was able to freely forgive his brothers under what were nearly incomprehensible circumstances. Though having been terribly mistreated by his brothers for years, he freely forgave them even when it was finally within his power to punish them. *"Moreover he kissed all*

*his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."*

Moses truly loved the people of Israel and made many sacrifices on their behalf during their journey through the wilderness of Sinai. One of the more notable occurred when he interceded for the people after they sinned by convincing Aaron to make the golden calf. God had told Moses that He would destroy the people and make a great nation of Moses' seed. Moses' humble and sincere intercession touched the heart of God; *"And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."*

Jonathan, the son of King Saul, was a wonderful example of sacrificial love. When David killed Goliath, Jonathan could easily have been envious of the attention given David. Instead, his nobility and self-sacrificing friendship were revealed, *"Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."* Later, when he knew that David was to be made king instead of him, Jonathan was willing to put his own ambitions aside and even risked his own life to intercede for that of David's.

Jesus' account of the Good Samaritan illustrates several principles of love. For one thing, the injured man was a Jew, and as a Samaritan he could easily have felt some level of prejudice against the other man since the *"Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."* Nevertheless, he had compassion on the unfortunate man and went to great effort and expense to help him. *"And went to him, and bound*

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*up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence (two days wages), and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*” Very likely the Good Samaritan was aware of the ill-feelings between his people and the Jews, and he very likely had his own activities planned out for the day. However in this instance he avoided judgment of his fellow man, exhibited humility and esteemed others higher than himself. By so doing, he fulfilled several precepts of love, *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”*

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, loved her Savior dearly. She was willing to undergo great financial sacrifice to show this love even in the face of public criticism: *“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s*

*son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”* Giving financially to one another when an opportunity arises is another way we can show sincere love to one another.

Showing love to one another provides many benefits to the church family. Showing love demonstrates a true conversion, *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”* Some other examples follow. Loving one another enough to admonish them, though difficult, not only brings the *“peaceable fruit unto righteousness,”* but it will increase love in the end: *“rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.”* Fervent love enables the church to flourish and retain its purity, *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”* Then our love one to another will show to the world that we are followers of Jesus, *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* This will in turn fulfill the desire of

Christ *“that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”*

Christian love is the peak of spiritual growth as described by the Apostle Peter: *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

(Footnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> John 13:35
- <sup>2</sup> Mark 12:31
- <sup>3</sup> Lev. 19:18
- <sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 13:4-5
- <sup>5</sup> Gen. 45:15
- <sup>6</sup> Exod. 32:11, 32
- <sup>7</sup> 1 Sam. 18:3-4
- <sup>8</sup> 1 Sam. 20:27-34
- <sup>9</sup> John 4:9
- <sup>10</sup> Luke 10:34-35
- <sup>11</sup> Phil. 2:3
- <sup>12</sup> John 12:3-8
- <sup>13</sup> 1 John 3:14
- <sup>14</sup> Heb. 12:11
- <sup>15</sup> Prov. 9:8
- <sup>16</sup> 1 Peter 4:8
- <sup>17</sup> John 13:35
- <sup>18</sup> John 17:21
- <sup>19</sup> 2 Peter 1:5-8