

THE PRAYER WARRIOR'S GREATEST WEAPON

TAKING ACTION AFTER PRAYER



ADAM HOUGE

The Prayer Warrior's Greatest Weapon: Taking Action After
Prayer™

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Jesus, the Ultimate Love Warrior

The hour was late as He knelt in the grass. Jesus looked up at the night sky, dreading the next few hours of His life.

“Father not as I will, but as You will,” He murmured silently as He finished His prayer.

A star twinkled in the distance as if in response.

Jesus waited for an answer of hope. But no reply was heard even though He prayed three times. By this He understood the Father’s will.

Jesus saw everything. His mind flashed forward to a few hours from that moment. He could see himself being struck and mocked by the Pharisees. Then He saw the flail strike Him when He was being scourged. Jesus buckled His back as if in response to a pain that wasn’t there yet. He could see the jagged pieces of the scourging tool whip and sink into the flesh of His back. Piece by piece He was torn apart, and the thought of it was torturing—knowing that in a few hours He would suffer this fate.

Then He saw the nails being pounded into place. His face contorted in agony at the sight of it. He watched Himself shriek with every strike of the hammer. The sky darkened in His Heavenly vision until all was finished. Then He saw Himself perish because of the lawless men who refused the love of God.

Jesus was awakened by a streak of what felt like water dripping across His eye. Another drip came from His forehead and stained the soil red as it landed. He was sweating blood in the thought of His suffering.

Jesus wiped His brow clean and looked at His hand. He considered the drops as He wiped them off his fingers and

onto His garment. He knew He was meant to shed His blood and that the process would be horrifying and gruesome.

But then, after a moment, He stood up with confidence. A smile danced on His lips for a moment as He thought of you. His suffering would be horrendous. But remembering you was enough to send Him forward with confidence—because you're worth it to Him.

Jesus is the ultimate love warrior. No one in Heaven or on earth can compare to Him or the measure of love He has for us. Even after His sacrifice, He is diligent to reach for the lost through His Spirit. He is diligent to search out your heart and comfort you. He is swift to love and slow to wrath. He watches every moment of your life and tenderly cherishes them all. He comforts your brokenness, provides for your needs, and leads you along smooth paths, that you can be held safely in His hand for eternity. He disciplines you as a father does his own child.

He nurtures and nourishes you like a nursing mother does her infant. God is tender with you at all times, and firm only when necessary.

With everything He is and in everything He does, God is love. When Jesus walked this earth, every single work was founded in the perfect love of the Father. Now we are commanded to do likewise.

Consider developing the heart of a true love warrior. Reflect Jesus in everything you do. To reflect Jesus is to reflect perfect love.

Let His love overtake you and consume every one of your deeds. Become the image and face of Love, even as Jesus is always.

Loving the Brethren

We understand the need to pray and be a prayer warrior, but this world needs the love of God just as greatly as it needs prayer. So don't only pray for your brethren asking God to help them. But pray and ask the Lord what YOU can do for them. Seek to help others and become the image of Christ's love. Pray for a battle plan, the actions of love that your brethren need. Then step out in boldness to fulfill them. Isn't this what Christ would do? Ask yourself how Jesus would pray for others. Wouldn't His mind also be set on a "next step" to help and love them? We also should be focused on the next step, willing to faithfully obey and reflect the heart of Jesus. It is the next step, in which we act on our faith, prayers, and the love of God that is our greatest weapon. Because as we step out God empowers us through faith and His Spirit to bring victory, and accomplish everything in His heart. So do not merely pray for others but be willing to be used by God to become the answer to other's prayers.

Every Christian is commanded to be the example of God's love. We must put the Lord above all else while not forsaking the need to love the brethren. If we love the Lord, then we must love one another. As it is written,

"And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." 1 John 4:21

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" 1 John 4:20

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:11

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1 John 3:18

We are commanded to love in truth. True love is proven by its works.

As it is also written,

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” 1 John 3:16

Consider that Jesus has proven His love through His sacrifice. Similarly, we must love not only in word but in our actions as well. If Jesus told us a million times that He loved us but had not laid down His life to forgive our sins and save us from hell, then how would He have loved us at all? And considering that Jesus gave His life for us to love us, is it really that much of a sacrifice to give a little bit of one's time and resources to deliver another from suffering?

Consider also that Jesus came and bore our infirmities on His shoulders; likewise, we should be found healing one another through the love of Christ. Are any among you suffering? Then relieve their burdens according to their need. Are any among you sick? Do not only pray for them, but visit them also and nurse them back to health, and so fulfill the love of Christ.

Has anyone you know come to Christ in prison? Then be faithful to visit and encourage him or her. Are any among you homeless? Do not just give them a meal; give them a home. Are any hungry? Do not merely give them a meal but also help them, that they may eat continually. In all of these things, God has commanded you to *do*, and the love of Christ is proven by its works. If any argue otherwise, then the love of God is not in them, nor have they known it, because by the works of love, Jesus Christ has saved our lives.

If you are a doctor and your brother or sister is too poor and sick to afford healthcare, wouldn't the love of Christ compel

you to heal him or her free of charge, even as Jesus has healed you and rescued you of your sins free of charge? And if one of you is a lawyer and your brother or sister has a legal matter but has no money, why shouldn't you help him or her for free, knowing that Jesus Christ is your mediator, who represents you free of charge before the Father who judges?

And know that the love of God judges thus: that if one died, all have died. Seeing then that Christ has died to this world, we also should be found doing the same, laying aside the materialism of this life to pick up the true and perfect love of Jesus Christ.

There are many in the church who have a habit of scratching the surface of another's need and never meeting it perfectly. Such people do not seek a way for the need to be filled, but rather they pray for their brethren, saying, "The Lord will help you!" when God has commanded us to help our brethren.

Be the example of Christ in what you do. Put on His image. Knowing that Jesus is the face of love, what image then should you bear? If you were in need, how would you help yourself? There is a saying that goes, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." But unfortunately, people interpret this phrase incorrectly. They say, "If I were homeless like my brother, I wouldn't expect somebody to give their hard-earned cash to get me out of my situation. I would pull myself up by the bootstraps as I choose to love my brother who has money." But remember that the Lord has commanded, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Therefore, consider that the phrase is really saying, "Do unto others as you would do for yourself." If you were homeless, you would work hard to pull yourself up by the bootstraps to save yourself from that situation. Love your brethren likewise, working as hard to deliver them from their

needs as you would work to deliver yourself from those same needs. If you had no help and would pull yourself up by the bootstraps, then pull others up by the bootstraps also.

This is what it really means to love a brother. It isn't what you would expect others to do for you in your situation but what you would do for yourself in that situation. In this you will be loving your neighbor as yourself. Hence we read,

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” James 2:14-17

“But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” 1 John 3:17

How can we claim to love God if we don't love one another from a sincere heart? I once knew of an older gentleman who sought help for depression at his church. Some mocked him behind his back, saying, “Christians don't suffer those things. Is he saved?” Others said, “I'll be praying for you,” but wouldn't do anything to help his need. Even the pastor would say behind his back, “He focuses on his situation too much, and I think he's looking for attention.”

But in reality, that man was looking for sincere love from his family in Christ. He needed comfort, and no one was willing to sit down with him and hear the problems going on his life. He felt depressed because his brothers in Christ didn't show him any love. He felt as if no one cared about the hardships he was enduring, and every time he reached out for help from the church for his spiritual warfare, emotions, and

poverty, his requests were met with “I’ll pray for you, brother”—only to hear later that those people gossiped about his situation behind his back.

This man couldn’t hold down a steady job in the unstable economy at the time. He had to spend his retirement money and had nothing left. No one would help him find employment or give him more than a week of groceries. He went from day to day not knowing from where his food would come. To make matters worse, he had lost his marriage a few years earlier, and it was eating him alive. His wife didn’t want him back, and his friends treated him as if his situation meant nothing to them. After being treated this way for a period of time, he clammed up and disappeared from the church. Then, about a month later, he shot himself in the head.

Those who look for attention have no intention to hurt themselves. This man did. When he saw that no one was there for him, he was swallowed up by worldly sorrow. It’s a shame no one took the time to guide him through his issues with the love of Christ.

Is this what the love of Christ should look like? Some argued that he couldn’t be both saved and struggling with the issues he faced at that time. But that is a pathetic excuse to justify oneself for not showing the love of Christ. Even if he had not been saved, shouldn’t we still have shown him God’s love, that he might be touched by it and receive the healing Jesus had to offer him through salvation?

His children argued that he was saved, however. They insisted that it was he who had led them to Christ. I didn’t know him personally to make that assessment, and whether he was or wasn’t saved shouldn’t have mattered. God loves everyone, and so should we.

Hearing this story should convict us on many different levels. At the funeral, a handful of people asked each other, "What could we have been doing differently to show this man God's love in order to deliver him from his situation?" But a majority of them showed no signs of personal remorse. While they wept for him and his family, they laid no burden on themselves. It was as if they blamed the man for his own problems. But at Judgment, God will ask us how we bore one another's burdens to fulfill the love of Christ. And that we are required to bear each other's burdens is evident. As it is written,

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2

And what fulfills the law but love? Consider this and be diligent to love those around you. Bear up their burdens and complete the love of Christ through the things you do and not merely the things you say.

There was a young man who was not a Christian but likewise wanted to commit suicide. He didn't tell anyone whom he knew how he felt, and he suffered greatly. Then one night he decided he was going to kill himself. He frequently played a particular video game, which was an outlet for his suffering. He had many friends from that game, whom he only knew over the internet. Before he killed himself, he decided to leave a suicide note, and he posted it to the online video game. He wasn't asking for help; he was just saying goodbye to the only friends he had ever had or known.

Immediately after he posted it, a friend contacted him, begging him to not kill himself. This suicidal boy read the message just before pulling the trigger. When he realized someone genuinely cared for him, it caused him to hesitate for a moment. Immediately after that message, there was an outpouring of messages, and his email was flooded with

hundreds of letters from his friends, begging him not to take his life.

By the end of the night, he had thousands of messages from all over the world, some from people who didn't even know him, begging him not to take his life. Hundreds of people whom he never met in person cared so much about him that they wanted to fly across the country to his home and show him how much he mattered to them. This changed his heart and saved his life that night. The next day, he immediately sought help, and he is alive today because of the love he was shown.

What convicts me most about this story is that none of these people were Christian. Thousands of unbelievers rallied to this man's side to save his life, being compelled by compassion. If the world would love like this, then why is it hard for some Christians to do the same? Why was it so hard for that church to be the example of Christ to the man before he took his life?

I don't know about you, but seeing the world act more loving than some of my brothers in Christ cuts me to the heart. Where has the love of God gone? Isn't His love greater than the world's? Then why isn't it more evident? Let this inspire you today to show the full love of Christ—and save a life.

While we should show the people of the world the love of Christ for their salvation, don't neglect the brethren. Be faithful to show those who love God the kindness of Christ as well. Wouldn't justice tell you that those who have been faithful to God and loved Him ought to be set free of their burdens? Doesn't justice dictate that you should be set free?

Yet I have heard some argue, "Christians have God to help them, and the world has nothing." But such a person is speaking against all Scripture and logic. The world has

nothing—not because they are ignorant but, rather, because they have willfully chosen not to love God. Instead they choose to follow their own hearts.

As it is written,

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience...”
Ephesians 2:1-2

The original Greek word for disobedience is *apeitheia*, which literally means “obstinance” or “obstinance to the divine will.” So the children of the world are also called the “sons of obstinance against the divine will of God.” They know what they’re doing. They know that they sin and that it offends God. But it is more desirable to them to live for the passing pleasures of the flesh rather than repent and please God through love and faith. Hence we also read,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...” Romans 1:18-20

The world is without excuse. If they didn’t know what they were doing, then how could God judge them? How can someone be condemned if he or she is ignorant to offenses? As it is written,

“For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:13

Those of the world willfully choose to be lawless by not submitting to the grace and love of God. They could have God protect them if they willfully surrender to the Lord, but they choose to live for the joys this world brings instead. It's a choice they make, and they are without excuse. In the past, Israel had the old law, but now the whole world has been given the new law, which is found in Christ Jesus. The law of liberty by which we are justified is to receive Christ as Savior and walk in His love and Holy Spirit. The world knows it offends God but refuses to be made right with God on His terms.

There are many unbelievers who will never change their ways, no matter how much love you show them. So should you be giving to the enemies of God but forsake the family of Christ? What would the perfect justice of God suggest? Should the friends of God be made to suffer while His enemies are relieved? Should you suffer need while God raises up your enemies to enjoy their life around you? Wouldn't you be grieved by this? Why would you be grieved? Because the justice of God, which reigns in your heart through Jesus, tells you that the person who is faithful in Christ should be taken care of. When you're suffering in need, that faithful person is you.

But how do you know whether God has chosen to use you as His tool or not? Submit to the will of God, and be willing to be the tool of Jesus and show the love of God in all you do. Become the image of God's love through example and not mere words. Do not only pray for the needy, as a prayer warrior, but also step up to God's call to love. Let your prayers not end with "amen"; but after "amen," let your prayers end with action. Remember that love is an action word, being a verb. Love is proven by works and not by mere words.

Wouldn't true love suggest that those who love God should be set free from their suffering? If you honestly believe that God should take care of your brethren, then open your heart to be used by God to do exactly that. Be submissive to God and help those who love the Lord before you help the enemies of God. Every church should have an "in-reach" before it has an "outreach." Reach into the church and love the brethren, bringing stability to one another in Christ. Then, afterward, as one unified body that has been stabilized through the love of God, reach out to the poor and suffering unbelievers for their salvation. But that we must love the brethren is evident. For it is written,

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."
Galatians 6:10

And also,

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Every unbeliever should know and understand that we are God's through the love we show one another. But if we forsake each other to help the world, how are we showing Christ's love at all? How are we different from the Pharisees in such a case? Even as Jesus said,

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." Luke 11:42

Sometimes in our zeal, we try to help the world yet we forsake the brethren. If you are given the option between helping either the world or a brother, and cannot choose both, then help the brother. As we said before, shouldn't the faithful in Christ receive the blessings and deliverance of God? If we say, "They have God; let God help them," then

we forsake love. We are the tools of God; therefore, let God help them through us. Do not let anyone pass by you without being touched by the love of God, whether he or she is of the world or of the Church. But if you must give to the needy, choose the one who deserves it.

If a man claimed to be your friend, how would you feel if he fed your enemy but let your child starve? If you left on a mission trip for several months and had no way of helping your child, wouldn't you ask your friend to help, vowing to repay anything your friend spent? How would you feel if he or she chose to feed a person who openly despised you, instead, while letting your child suffer against your wishes? Would that friend be your enemy or friend through such actions? An enemy, no doubt.

How do you think God feels when we feed the poor in the world but let His own children starve and suffer? Those who befriend the world and forsake God's family have an account they must give. And as we read,

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

And also,

“But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” Luke 12:45-47

A true love warrior would love every person in all discernment, whether each person were of the brethren or not. I am not saying that we shouldn't show the world God's love. We all know that we must. But we should love the unsaved along with the saved, without leaving works of love undone. But if you are given the choice to help either the world or your family in Christ, don't forsake a brother.

Let each of us fear the Lord and walk in the fullness of His love. There are a few who have a habit of walking contrary to the love of Christ. It's not that we all do this, but let each of us be careful to walk in love, rebuking those who don't. That way we all may become a body of God's love together.

Always examine yourself daily to be certain you are putting on the love of Jesus continually. It's easy to fall into the busy 9-to-5 grind of life, grow complacent, and not notice another person's need. Life can wear us out, and it's hard to notice someone else's needs if we don't stay circumspect. If we continue in the Spirit and pay attention to the inward voice of God, we will hear the Lord more easily as He convicts us to help others. Take the time to pray for opportunities to love, and pray for open eyes.

Being a Faithful Witness

When we say that we need to “love the world,” we must distinguish between loving those who are of the world and loving the things of the world. We are commanded not to love the things of this world. As we read,

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

If we love the Lord, we will seek to do His will and carry our crosses. As we stated before, we are not called to live for this life but to live every day for Christ and His purpose for us.

When you love those of the world, they may exhort you to live like them, but do not conform to them. The world must conform to Christ; Christ does not conform to them. Do not be deceived, for unbelievers are not saved by our becoming like the world. Rather, they are led to Christ when we act like Christ and love them. Christ is nothing like the world, nor did He become like the world to let the world in. Rather, He was the image of the love and glory of the Father. We likewise must be the same, taking on the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

When they see the true depths of Christ’s love, this will convict the people of this world, showing them how far the east is from the west. When they see the Grand Canyon that parts them from God, they’ll see their need for Him.

The difference between the world and God is love. Remember that love fulfills the law. Thus, we see that His

power and love, when working together, result in holiness, godliness, and all that the Lord is.

Let them see that Christ is on the east side of the canyon and they are on the west. Show them His love, that they may perceive their need for Him and desire Him. Then convey the gospel to them so that they may understand they can only cross the canyon through the cross of Jesus Christ.

God has called us to love all men. Therefore, work out love toward the world, that the gospel may have meaning for those of the world. Be kind and, most of all, repay them with good when they do evil to you. Yet remember to preach the gospel. Do not merely show acts of kindness but also preach. Some have a habit of showing love without speaking it, but we are saved through hearing the gospel and believing it.

As we read,

“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.”
Proverbs 27:5

And also,

“For ‘Whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Romans 10:13-14

If you love those in the world, you will preach truth to them and guide them to it. Not only that, but we are commanded to do so. As we read,

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in

season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Be diligent to express truth and to share the gospel. Do not withhold the words in your heart but share them faithfully as one who loves the Lord. Lead the world to Christ through works of love but always be ready to preach. For when another’s heart is ready, God will give you words.

But if you’re not attentive to the Lord, you won’t know when or what to speak. Now, some may contend that they know the gospel and thus can share it without the guidance of the Spirit. But God knows each individual’s heart—what he or she needs to hear and what will push him or her away. What, then, is wrong with asking the Lord to speak through you, that your words may be God’s word for the other person’s life? For we are saved through faith, and faith comes by hearing God’s word, not man’s interpretation of it.

Be attentive to the Lord’s voice, for He will speak through you and teach you what to say. Even as He said to Moses,

“So the Lord said to him, ‘Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.’” Exodus 4:11-12

In this your mouth will be filled with salt as the Holy Spirit guides your words. Even so, this is how a true preacher hears from God and conveys His message. The preacher listens carefully, inwardly to the Spirit; then whatever is laid on his heart from God, he speaks. Hence, you are taught by God through the man. Even so, teach the world to find Christ, through Christ’s leading.

Now, if the world doesn’t accept your testimony, do not be disheartened. Through time and your effort to love your enemy, they will be convicted. Although not all will be,

those few who are will be a great sigh of relief to you. Then, by conviction, they will seek Christ. However, there will be some who will never accept Christ. They'll persecute you and exhort you to leave God and "get a real life." Even your own mother or father may tell you this. But do not be disheartened. Honor God and serve the Lord Christ. He will deliver you even from your family's insults. The world has always hated God. This is more than manifest by its love for sin. Jesus made it clear that if they persecuted Him, they will persecute us. As we read,

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." John 15:18-21

From such people the Lord calls us to depart. Rather than wasting our time on those who don't want God in truth, leave them and approach those who do. You can't advance the kingdom by focusing on people who won't change. You advance it through communicating with those who will receive and believe. But that we should depart from those who won't receive the Gospel is evident. For it is written,

"When they persecute you in this city, flee to another..."
Matthew 10:23

And also,

"And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them." Luke 9:5

If they won't receive you, wipe the dust off and move on. Continue in the places and with the people who will receive Christ. By focusing your efforts on those who don't care, you're forsaking those who will care. Don't worry about the masses who won't believe. Remember that Paul went to the few. In Macedonia he entered two homes, that of the woman who begged him to stay with her and that of the guard of the prison. A little here and a little there added up to a massive ministry in the end. By this method Paul laid the foundation of the Church as we know it. He worked hardest on the faithful few, all of whom went forward to produce much fruit in building the Church. But that Paul focused on the few and tutored them was evident. As we read,

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain." Galatians 2:2

Those who had a reputation were not the rich and famous among men but those who had a reputation in honoring Christ. He tutored them privately and poured into them. That way these faithful men might go forward and produce more fruit. He must have watched the people around him and then discerned who took their walks most seriously. Then he established them as bishops and leaders. In this way, those whom he left behind would continue to minister even as he had ministered. He didn't rely on the education and ordinations of men but determined through the Holy Spirit whom God was appointing and ordaining for ministry. Thus, he taught them and raised them up.

One could say the Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 rule, almost applies here. This basically means that 80 percent of the greatest advancements of the church are accomplished by 20 percent of the believers. Now, this may not be exact, but it's a similar concept. So if you want to further the kingdom

faster and harder, what do you do? Love on all, but give your greatest efforts to the 20 percent who want Christ and will be passionate for Him.

We should focus our efforts on those who want the faith and want to be committed to it. Those who don't have Christ must be loved on, but if they remain vile against God and bitter against the Church, then we ought to move on to those who will be convicted by the gospel.

The world may not persecute you but may nonetheless refuse the gospel. Some people will have no interest for years and will never change. Then such people, who don't condemn you, will seek to turn you from God, whether secretly and subtly or obviously and blatantly. Most people guilty of this will be your unsaved friends and family. They will think that your eternally life changing faith is just a fad, and they'll try to turn you from it to "get you interested in other things." If anyone refuses the Lord and is trying to turn you from Him, then you must remain committed to God and refuse that person. Come out from among those of the world and be separate unto the Lord.

Living for Christ is a call to die—to die to this life, to die to self, to die to friends and family, that we may live for Christ. But that we should love the Lord more than we love family is evident. As Jesus said,

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."
Matthew 10:37

And that our families will hate us on account of Christ is likewise evident. For we also read,

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘Set a man against his father, a daughter against her own mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;’ and ‘A man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’”
Matthew 10:32-36

If we do not confess God, then we are disobeying His command to go forth and make disciples. If we obey Him, then we can be certain that we will be persecuted by our family. Even so, we are exhorted to put our confidence in them no longer but rather to pursue Christ. As we also read,

“Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom. For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household. Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.” Micah 7:5-7

Your family may forsake you, but Jesus will never forsake you. And the word speaks comfort to your heart in this way:

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me.” Psalm 27:10

We are called to live for this world no longer, nor for the people of this world, but for Christ. Becoming like them or communing with them when we should be separate is not loving them according to Christ. Neither are we loving God when we do so. We should love them with sincerity, but if they don't receive it, we should be willing to move on if God guides us to do so. Remain submissive to His leading. If He

tells you to stay, then obey, for who knows what the future may hold? But if He tells you to leave, then He knows that your greatest work will be done elsewhere. Submit to Him and obey.

Some Christians' families are idols to them. They would rather stick to their flesh and blood and justify it than submit to the Holy Spirit. When the Lord calls them away, they would say, "How is it loving for me to leave? God is a God of family!" But if this were the case in the sense that they preach, then why did Jesus say He came to bring a sword? Rather, He is a God of those families who walk in Christ. For those who do not have Christ are spiritually dead, and those who do are alive. And as Jesus said,

"For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." Luke 20:38

Therefore, the Lord has made a separation between the children of light and the children of darkness. Have you not heard from the beginning that God separates the light from the dark? As we read,

"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day." Genesis 1:3-5

God separates every form of light from every form of darkness. He makes a separation between the children of light and those of the dark. We are the wheat, and they are the chaff. Be faithful and come out from those who refuse the Lord. That we are to come out from the world is evident. For it is written,

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord

has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'" 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

"Surely He did not mean families!" some may say. But surely He did, which is why He said He came to bring a sword. Those family members who have not believed, but to whom you yet cling, will depart into hell by their own choosing while you, as you seek to walk faithfully, will depart into the arms of God. In death you are separated eternally from unbelieving family members, as even now you are separated from them, unless they repent. For you have found life in Jesus Christ, and they have rejected the Lord willfully and knowingly. They have denied conviction and walked in the joy of sin. For this God will judge them, but you will escape judgment, having loved and feared the Lord.

We are called to love the world but not to be of the world. To be sanctified means to be set apart for God's purpose. Likewise, we need to be personally sanctified unto Christ, being set apart for His purpose.

Do not embrace the world and live according to it. For God did not call us to become like the world and to let it in. Rather, Christ called us to be set apart in His likeness, that those of the world may see their need for Him. In this we are truly loving the Lord and loving the world with an upright heart—that it may find Christ in truth.

When witnessing to the world, do not spend your entire day there but, rather, find time to be refreshed in Christ. We

work more like glow-sticks, needing to be pressed up against the light to give off the light. The world will certainly put out your light and quench the Spirit. Those of the world hate God and hate when you shine the light of God on them. It convicts them, and they hate conviction unless they have been broken by His love.

Thus, we don't always pour out, but spend much time being filled. Then, after having been filled, we go forward to minister to the world as God leads us. God draws those whom He wants to Himself, and we step out to speak to those whom He has drawn.

As we read,

“Jesus therefore answered and said to them, ‘Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.’” John 6:43-44

Now, God does desire all men to come to repentance, and He will give us words for all men. But those who end up saved are the ones whose hearts were affected by the Holy Spirit, having been drawn by the Father. In other words, those whose hearts are prepared by God will receive God. They must go through various circumstances in life that He uses to break them; then they will be convicted by the gospel. In this we should pray that God would send us to the easy ones—that is, to the people who would receive the Lord quickly. Yet we should be faithful to love on, and stir up the hearts of, those who are hardened toward the Lord.

Pray that God would give you words and prepare the hearts of the people. He knows their hearts perfectly and what they need most. Let Him lead your mouth, that it may be filled with the salt of Christ. Then, by this, they will be more likely to receive the gospel, having heard the perfect words of God.

But do not spend much time lingering among them. By continuing among them, you will find yourself influenced and led to sin, by which you will dishonor the Lord. Be a light but don't let your candle be extinguished among them. That those of the world influence us to act wickedly is evident, for we read,

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”
1 Corinthians 15:33

Evil company corrupts good habits, and we are seeking to establish good habits. Therefore, be sanctified unto God and come out from the world. If your own family seeks to turn you from God, then live for Christ. Honor the Lord and follow Him. Love the world with sincerity but love the Lord more. For of our neighbor we read,

“...You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39

But of the Lord we read,

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” Mark 12:30

Therefore, love the Lord more. Give Him your all and remain faithful and committed to Him. Lead the world to Christ but do not be overcome by it.

If the world persecutes you, do not run away immediately. Rather, remain attentive to the leading of the Spirit. Seek the Lord and pray for your enemies. He will show you how to love them and bless them most. But that we should do good to those who hate us is evident. For it is written,

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, Feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a

drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:17-21

If you're persecuted, pray about how you should love and bless your enemy. Then pay attention to your enemy. God may put you in the right place at the right time to hear your enemy telling another person how he wishes he could be blessed. Or God may even lay the right thing to do on your heart. If you know that God has spoken to you, obey Him without question even if it doesn't make sense to you. God, not you, knows your enemy's heart, so trust Him and walk in love toward those who don't love you.

Don't just seek to kill with kindness. Don't simply try to do a few nice things or a few random acts of kindness. Although we should perform such acts, they may not lead the other person to the truest sense of conviction. The deepest conviction comes from sincere, deep love. That one, extremely needed and very generous act of kindness may be all it takes to break the other person and convict him of his sins.

Do good to your enemies and only flee if you're told to do so by God. Also, it is always good to back down from any confrontation so as to not create enemies. Be a peacemaker. Remember this and be meek. To be meek suggests that you will yield under pressure rather than exploding under it.

Being zealous for God in the way you love others will change your life forever. Beginning with loving those around you, the seeds of love will produce the fruit of God's goodness in your life. Remain committed to Him and love Him above all. Do not submit to the world or desire the things of the world. Rather, live for Christ and make an impression on others by setting the example of His love.

Praying for Opportunity

Pray zealously for the opportunity to love. Love is the fulfillment of the law and the capital commandment of God. If we do not love, then we are not God's. Even as it is written,

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”
1 John 4:8

And as mentioned previously, we also read,

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” 1 John 4:20

Love is the summation of the magnitude and magnificence of God. Without love, we are nothing. But love is not a word, nor is it expressed in mere words. Rather, it is expressed through action. It is the active, outward expression of the inward God who convicts and leads us daily.

Therefore, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as He leads you. Pray for open eyes, that you can see the needs of others to fill them. Look for those who are hurting and be intentional about it.

This is not a call to self-righteous works but to obedience to the love of God. Remember the parable Jesus spoke:

“And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’

“So he said, ‘Teacher, say it.’

“‘There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?’

“Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’

“And He said to him, ‘You have rightly judged.’ Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.’” Luke 7:40-47

Beloved, have you been forgiven much? Indeed! Therefore, go and love much.

If anyone has sinned against you, go to him or her and solve your disagreement. If your brother will not hear you, even if you have apologized, then involve others if it is at all possible. Those to include are elders who will help bring your adversary to repentance with sensitivity. But be careful not to share your issues with those who would gossip. For they are neither elders nor reliable persons who would properly rebuke your adversary in the love of God. Rather, they will either defend you wickedly by gossip behind your back or betray you with their idle words. Thus, it is most appropriate to take your issue to the elders for the sake of unity, love, godliness, and all holiness.

Be the example of Christ in all you do. If your brother has an issue with you, do not respond angrily, but gently. While there is a time to rebuke with sharpness, there is also most certainly a time for gentleness. Even as we also read,

“By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone.” Proverbs 25:15

Let love be without hypocrisy. Do not love one brother and then exclude another who doesn't appeal to you. Do not involve yourself in Christian cliques, which some of the church have a habit of creating, especially among the youth and young adults.

However, there are even some cliques among the adults in the Church. This is not pleasing in the sight of God. For those who only keep to their friends in Christ whom they know, and do not wholeheartedly welcome those whom they do not know, are not acting any differently from the world. As Jesus said,

“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” Luke 6:32-36

Consider this and take it to heart. Examine yourself to determine how you have been loving others. It's easy for us automatically to justify ourselves and say, “I've been right with God in this and that.” It's human nature to do so, and to have true scrutiny requires us to perform out-of-character thinking. This out-of-character thought only comes through submission to the Holy Spirit. God illuminates our hearts as we meditate on Him and makes clear how we have been transgressing and how we should get back on course with Him.

Keep your eyes fixed on the Lord at all times. A true love warrior not only loves all those around him or her but also

remembers to keep the first commandment as most sacred and holy. That is to say, you must be sold out and wholly dedicated to loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Test yourself in this at this time. Seriously, do this—and don't continue reading without doing so.

Look at yourself with a fair mind. How have you been loving God with your heart? All your words and actions overflow from the heart. How have these been glorifying God? How have they not been glorifying Him? Is there any way you haven't been honoring Him in these things? Take the time to humbly repent and get back on course with God. Dedicate yourself to growth and let the Spirit renew your heart daily, by continually meditating on His presence through prayer and constant worship.

Test yourself again. How have you been loving the Lord with all your soul? Is there anything that is taking the place of God in your life? It's easy to say "no" to this, but be humble before the Lord and honestly consider the question. When given the opportunity to spend time with God—let's say, immediately after work—what would you rather do: watch TV, watch a movie, play a game, or pray silently in the quietness to be refreshed in the Spirit? If you have been choosing to do other things, then consider your heart in this. If you think of fellowship as an opportunity to meet with friends, play, and socialize, then your heart is not right. Fellowship in the Bible's original Greek is *koinōnia*. This word literally means both "fellowship" and "communion."

To have fellowship is to commune in Christ with one another. This means that Christ must be the centerpiece. So when we study the Scriptures or pray together, we are fellowshiping. Afterward, when we play board games, talk about the football game, and engage in other idle activities, we are hanging out with a group of friends. If fellowship to

you is not about communing in the Holy Spirit with your brethren but, rather, going bowling, playing games, watching movies, and so on, then your interpretation of fellowship is not lined up with the word of God. How does a game of bowling amount to the righteousness of Jesus Christ? How does a movie do this?

While God does permit these things and they have their place in life, if all you do is play and eat rather than grow with your brethren in your relationship with Christ, then you are succumbing to the seduction of a secret idol.

Even as it is written,

“And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’” 1 Corinthians 10:7

And also,

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

Therefore, Beloved, dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to the will of God. If you love the Lord, then let it be reflected in actions through daily submission to the Holy Spirit.

The word ‘idol’ in the Bible literally means “a thing of nothingness.” While we do not worship golden calves anymore, if there is anything taking your attention away from God, then it is becoming your god. For some, that god may be money or a job. It may be their family, whether saved or unsaved. It may be games or idle entertainment. Then, rather than growing constantly and daily in Christ, they choose to commit their time and resources to these idols.

They proceed to meet up with their brethren and “fellowship” over idols. Thus, their fellowship is not in Christ but in idols. Is this type of fellowship pleasing to God? Or are idols and fellowship with them an abomination to Him?

Now, some may claim God’s grace at this time, but this is inappropriate if such a person has no intention of repenting. We know that before we had Christ, if we didn’t repent of our sins, we couldn’t be saved. Why do some, after receiving the Lord, fall into the deception of believing that God’s grace covers purposeful and unrepentant sin?

In His judgment, God will expose this cult for what it is. Accept the truth of God and the fear of the Lord. Love Him with sincerity. Be zealous and repent, for the judgment of God is at hand.

If someone claims to be saved and claims to be Christ’s, then why would he or she trample the grace of God and count it as a common thing? The Lord’s justice and sacrifice did not dictate that a man’s sins should be justified but, rather, that the man himself should be justified through repentance permitted by the mercy of God.

If you love the Lord, then you will count the cross of Christ as a beautiful thing, take it to heart that He died because of your sin, and then seek to be pure in Christ through abiding daily in the Holy Spirit.

And how does one abide? Through constant prayer, daily meditation on His word, and continual worship throughout the day. As we commit to these things, we focus on the presence of the Spirit of God. Then, by focusing on the Spirit and listening intently to His voice, you will hear His convictions and obey them.

Thus, by obedience to the Spirit of God, you will be justified. If anyone says otherwise, he or she has not been made whole in Christ. For the word ‘holy’ literally means “to make

whole.” By this we know that the ‘Holy’ Spirit makes a man sound, whole, and perfect in Christ. Just having the Spirit isn’t enough. You must obey Him!

The first sin that separated humanity from God was disobedience. Jesus wasn’t not crucified to justify those who are disobedient to the gospel but, rather, the obedient. For those who obey believe Jesus’ testimony, and in the fear of the Lord they repent. Then, being in love with God, they dedicate themselves to doing rightly from that point forward.

Yet some slip into the false doctrine of being justified in sin and thus become complacent in their walks. Not every Christian is like this, but for the few who are, God commands you to repent and to be made right with Him.

For the rest of us, complacency comes through the constant grind of life. It is easy, through the course of work, school, taking care of children, and so on, for us to fall into complacency. We become more concerned with the needful tasks of today than with our own relationship with God. It is not that we intend to do so, but because we become distracted by the necessities of life, we forget the need to grow constantly in Christ and abide in His spirit through meditating on Him.

Examine yourself in this. Have you been loving the Lord with all your soul, or are you being distracted by life? Rededicate yourself to the Lord and to growing in Him. Remember to draw near God constantly. Not only through a devotion—which is necessary—but also through fervent prayer. Even as it is written,

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving...” Colossians 4:2

And also,

“...pray without ceasing...” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Now, as we continue down the list that constitutes the greatest commandment, consider also: How have you been loving God with all your mind? Have you allowed idleness to rise up? If you are constantly praying as you ought, then idleness will not overtake your mind. But if you are allowing your mind to wander idly, then you will focus on the things of this life rather than on the things of Christ. For those of you who struggle with bondage and temptation, take the time to examine yourself. Just before you are tempted, your mind has likely been wandering idly. Learn to notice when it happens to wander, and choose to pray and worship diligently in the Spirit of God instead. By this you will overcome sin. If you are caught up in the heat of temptation, then focus on prayer and not on the tempting thought. Remember that Jesus commanded us to pray thus: “Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from Satan.” And He said to Paul, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Pray for Him to be your strength in those moments. Believe that He will be, with all your heart, and focus on the prayer rather than on the desire to sin. As the Holy Spirit overtakes you, suddenly the desire to sin will fade. But if you allow your thoughts to linger on temptation, you will certainly fall into it. So let your mind leave the tempting thought by prayer and worship instead. Flee the situation of temptation both physically and mentally. Continue to meditate and abide in the Spirit, and sin will be easy to overcome.

For those who do not struggle with such things, still examine yourself. How have you been honoring God with your thoughts? Have you had idleness? Have you made plans without laying them before God? This can be easy to do, through necessity and simply forgetting to pray. But

remember to relinquish your plans to God, that you can live for His will.

For the will of God and perfect compliance with it must be the goal of every Christian, even as it is written,

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...” Colossians 1:9-10

Increase in the knowledge of God and grow in Christ. Be fruitful in every good work and live for the will of God, not for your own will. Use your free will to surrender, through love, to God’s will. Commit your plans to the Lord. Glorify Him by submission. Don’t try to figure out the works He wants you to do. Ask Him, and His Spirit will lead you to them naturally.

Be of an edified mind. Do not allow any corrupt thoughts to enter but dedicate yourself to loving God and glorifying Him with your thoughts. Take the time to pray continually, inwardly, and allow your mind to rest and focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit by listening carefully to the Lord and obeying His voice.

Test yourself also in strength. We are commanded to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. So ask yourself how you’ve been loving Him with your strength. What does it mean to love God with all your strength?

Ask yourself whether you have been wholly devoted to growing in Christ and walking in the Spirit. Some believe that loving God with all their strength means applying and practicing the concepts of the Bible as hard as they can. But such a mindset is legalism. While we must obey the gospel, it is the Holy Spirit who shows us how and when to apply

and practice the concepts of the Bible on a moment-by-moment basis.

Therefore, it is necessary for every Christian to be intimately attuned to the voice of God. We must grow in discernment of His voice, that we can continually obey the Spirit. It is His work for which we must strive, not our own plans and goals, which are really just self-righteousness in a hidden package. And as it is written,

“To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” Colossians 1:29

We are called to strive according to His working. This we do through obedience to the Spirit of God. But if we are distracted with the things of this life, then we will not obey as we ought. Why? Because we won't hear His voice, seeing as we are paying attention to other things. But if we listen to Him and obey with all our hearts and strength, then righteousness will come naturally. Hence, love fulfills the law.

Knowing this, we also must love one another fervently, cherishing each other and caring for one another's needs. If we can't love God without loving the brethren, then our actions toward one another must portray our love for God at all times. Be fervent to care for another's needs. And be diligent to lead another to truth, seek the truth of God, and be wholly dedicated to it, for this pleases the Lord. Even as it is written,

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 1:4

God has no greater joy than that we should walk in the truth of His doctrine. Why? Because it is the truth of His gospel that sets us free. As we read,

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” John 8:31-32

Let God’s word abide in you. Meditate on His doctrine and submit to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. But that we must be taught by the Spirit is evident. As we read,

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” John 6:45

And also,

“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” 1 Corinthians 2:13

But how are we taught by the Spirit? Through listening to His voice. As we read the Scriptures, He speaks to us. He compares each lesson in the Bible with another. He shows us as we study how one scripture aligns with another and how it all comes together to create a wider picture. Then, as we discern His voice and are taught by it, we are led to the perfect truth of the doctrine.

That the Spirit leads us in truth is evident, for we know that God cannot lie. Therefore, to claim that the Holy Spirit would lead you astray, or in a false or less-than-perfect way, is to blaspheme Him. To blaspheme is to speak evil of God, and we are speaking evil of the Spirit by claiming that the perfect truth of the Father is not in Him. And as we also read,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” John 16:13

How has the Holy Spirit been leading you into all truth? Have you been paying attention to His voice constantly and allowing Him to teach you and guide you into truth? Do you know for certain that He has been teaching you as you study? Examine yourself in this, and if you do not know for certain, then be diligent to change that by committing yourself to the Holy Spirit today, to be taught by Him.

This requires for you to discern between the words of your heart and those of the Holy Spirit. Satan also likes to mimic God's voice. Thus, you must grow in discernment. Why does God allow the noise of your heart and of Satan to drown out His voice? To test you and give you free will. Will you sit quietly in faith and wait for God's voice? Or will you listen to what appeals most to you and obey that instead of God?

Wait for faith and learn to discern the Lord's voice. When you have discerned it, then drown out every other voice and care only about the Lord's voice. For without hearing God's voice, no one can walk by faith. As it is written,

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

Faith comes by hearing God's voice. Whenever God speaks, our natural response must always be one of faith. So listen intently for His voice, that you may be led into all truth. Be diligent to seek His truth, denying your own heart. Do not ask yourself what the Scriptures mean to you, and do not ask your brethren what they think the Scriptures mean. Ask God what the Scriptures mean, because He wrote them. His Holy Spirit penned the written word through men. Therefore, if you listen to His teachings, you will walk in perfect doctrine.

Know also that Jesus denied that the doctrine was His, but rather He ascribed its authority to the Father. As it is written,

“Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.’” John 7:16-18

Jesus denied Himself in this and submitted with reverence to the Father. We must do likewise, knowing that the doctrine of God is of the highest authority in heaven and on earth. You are neither submitting to nor obeying the doctrine of God if you are forming your own opinions about it. God’s opinion is all that matters. He is the one who will judge you. He is the one who will determine how you have conformed to His word. If you think you have conformed but in fact hold opinions, then you have only truly conformed to your own opinion, not to the truth of God. In this you will be judged and have an account to give.

If you love the Lord, then the truth will mean much to you. If the truth matters, then you will grow in understanding it and lead your brethren to it as well. Even as it is written,

“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” James 5:19-20

Notice first of all that it says, “Brethren, if anyone among you....” James is talking to the brethren in this case and saying to them, “If a brother who is one of you wanders from truth....”

Notice also that it finishes by saying, “...will save a soul from death.” If we do not walk in the truth of the Father’s doctrine, we are not saved. If someone says, “I do walk; I am born again,” but does not submit daily to the Holy Spirit,

then he or she is a liar. For he who says he walks in truth must also walk in the Holy Spirit. We do not walk in truth unless we walk in the Spirit, because it is the Spirit who leads us daily into the truth.

Therefore, if you are born again and trespass into false doctrine, know that there is a judgment for it. If you love the Lord, you will seek the truth to live for it and will diligently lead others to it as well.

Not only should we lead the brethren to truth but we should also diligently care for one another's needs. As it is also written,

“But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” 1 John 3:17

Be diligent to provide for others and to love your brethren. Yet do not love only your brethren but your enemies as well. By such action, we are called the sons of God. As Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48

How do we become perfect? Through the perfect application of the love of God. As it is also written,

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” Colossians 3:14

Love your enemies and provide for their needs kindly and gently. By kindness they may be convicted to repent and convert, thus becoming your brethren in Christ. Take this to heart and be the example of God’s gentle loving-kindness toward them in everything you do.

Yet some are very zealous in this but forget to love their brethren. We wrote in detail about such behavior in an earlier chapter. Examine yourself in this. Have you been faithfully loving your enemies and showing them kindness? Have you also been loving your brethren? Do not leave any of the works undone. Love in everything you are and with everything you do.

If you merely show an unsaved person kindness but do not preach the gospel for fear of offending or keeping the peace, then you are not loving that person at all. Your kindness will amount to nothing. For without the gospel, his or her soul will depart into hell.

Do not treat others as you would the dirt that slips through the gardener’s fingers. Count them as precious, even as Jesus did when He sacrificed himself for them, and preach the Gospel. If it offends them, that is their own fault. But if you withhold truth and the word of God, then you are not showing perfect and pure love.

Grow in these things and commit your heart to become a warrior for the love of God. Pray constantly for opportunity to love others. Pray for open eyes and look intentionally for ways to love others. God will open your eyes even as you pray and show you what to do. Know also that most people are too proud to ask for help. So this requires you to notice need and fill it. Be of an open heart and love as Jesus loves.

Look for ways to serve your brethren. Grow a servant's heart and constantly look for ways to serve. Do not seek to be served but to serve. For it is written,

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.'" Luke 22:24-27

Let us not be benefactors, but let us benefit others through the love of Christ. As we also read,

"And the Lord said, 'Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming," and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.'" Luke 12:42-47

Take Jesus' words to heart and serve with love and diligence.

How You Finish the Race Is Up to You

How would your relationship with the Lord be different if you knew that today were your last day to live? How would you want to finish the race? Would you press hard at the end? What legacy would you like to leave behind with your friends and family? On your last day of life, would you want them to know that they're loved? How would you serve your brethren? How would you love on them? Would you allow sin to take you over, or will you press hard to make today your best day in God. Would you take your relationship with Him seriously and make sure you did all you could to make Him happy?

Consider these things and take them to heart because whatever you would do to honor the Lord on your last day of life, you should be doing right now and every day.

The world has a saying to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die. Knowing that it is true that tomorrow we could die, let those of us in Christ take care to act in wisdom. Love, serve, and be merry in Christ, for tomorrow you die.

Love as if there is no tomorrow. Love as if today is your last. Finish the race well!

Begin with those nearest to you, then move outward. Begin by building the foundation of the house and then work your way to the roof. Clean the inside of the glass before you clean the outside. Love your family in Christ and be zealous in your relationship with Jesus.

There is a war going on in this world. It is a war for the hearts, minds, and souls of men, and the world would have men dedicate themselves to the foolishness of this life. By such works, however, they find death. How can these things be overcome? By the Spirit of God and by love. Wage war

with the sword of the Spirit and the dagger of kindness. This battle can only be won by becoming a true love warrior!

So dedicate your whole life to becoming the image of God's love with everything you are and in everything you do.

I'd Love to Hear from You!

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About the Author

Adam is a preacher, teacher and #1 internationally bestselling author of over 100 books on the Christian faith. He is a devoted husband and father of three boys. Through his travels, he's seen the need for a new awakening and a new revival: a revival of the heart. Come join Adam on this journey of redemption and experience God like never before!

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