**Metro Men’s World Ministry**

## Sabbath School Notes: May 17-23

Law of God and the Law of Christ

Our memory text for this week is John 15:10, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” Obedience to the Ten Commandments is how we show our love to both God and man. As Jesus said to the lawyer, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matthew 22:37-39

So our study this week will focus on being loving. Let us begin by turning to our Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12:31, “But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

According to Paul we should covet the best gifts. What are the best gifts? These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can find a list of these spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; Ephesians 4:8, 11-15; Romans 12:6-8.

Let us turn to 1 Cor. 12:8-10, and take a look at some of these spiritual gifts and see why they are so important to God’s church.

We first find the gift of wisdom. The gift of wisdom is when someone is able to provide wise counsel for the church with all the available information. They may not be the person who gathers all the knowledge, but he is able to utilize that knowledge and make practical applications. We need people with the gift of wisdom or we would make many more mistakes.

Then there is the gift of knowledge. These are individuals who have a way of digging deeper into the Word. These individuals may or may not be teachers. They may or may not have the gift of wisdom to utilize this deeper knowledge. However, they have a real zeal, interest, and ability to gather information. Imagine how important this gift is to the church.

Then in verse 9 is the gift of faith. Here are people who encourage us to move forward by faith even though we lack the necessary resources. Imagine how many churches and schools never got built, and how many Bible studies never got started, because we lack this essential gift of faith.

Then there is the gift of healing. We know that the health message is the right arm of the gospel. This gift of healing has opened so many doors to share the everlasting gospel. There are so many other gifts of the Spirit. But there is something greater than all these gifts of the Spirit, as Paul says, ““But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” What is the “more excellent way”? It is the way of love.

Paul wrote in the following chapter, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [agape love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [agape love], I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [agape love], it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Without love all these gifts of the Spirit would be meaningless. After all, God Himself is not simply all-powerful and all-talented, “God is love.” 1 John 4:8. And since we were created in His image, we should be loving too.

**The Power of Love**

“For the love of Christ **constraineth** us,” is the reason why the early church gladly suffered persecution, even martyrdom, for the Master. They were constrained by His love to go to distance lands to tell the whole world about the love of God. But did they just go and tell people that God is all-loving? Absolutely not! They told how this all-loving God is also all-holy, and His holiness is expressed in His moral law.

**How important is love to the Christian?**

Jesus said, “Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, **because thou hast left thy first love**. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Revelation 2:4, 5

I like the way Weymouth translates this verse, saying, “Yet I have this against you—that you no longer love Me as you did at first. Be mindful, therefore, of the height from which you have fallen. Repent at once, and act as you did at first, or else I will surely come and remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.” Weymouth.

You can have all the right doctrines, but if you have not love, you will lose you candlestick. Diminished love for Christ will steal away your joy and peace in the Lord. We have to be so ever careful not to allow anything to come between us and our Lord. Do not allow other attractions and interests to lessen your love for God.

Why do we remember the widow with her gift of two mites? She gave all that she had, which was an expression of her faith, dedication, and love for God. This teaches us that our work is not so much measured by its magnitude, but by the motive underlying the action.

Consider this beautiful statement from the Spirit of Prophecy, “The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness, is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred with self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do. Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life,--it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 402

# The Law of Love and the Commandment to Love

According to the following verses, there is an inseparable connection between love and obedience:

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.” John 14:20-24

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandment: and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:2, 3

# The Commandment of Love

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34

This is not the eleventh commandment, but a summary of the commandments. This new commandment was not new in time, but in experience. There was a new and fresh reason to love. “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” 1 John 4:11. Christ’s coming to our world placed love in a new and fresh light.

Consider how rare the love of Christ is: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6-8

**The Rule of Love**

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12

What does the golden rule mean? Live to bless others

Jesus said, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.” Matthew 10:39. It is the life of selflessness that can keep the golden rule.

Consider these inspired words from the Spirit of Prophecy, “No one can live the law of God without ministering to others. But there are many who do not live out Christ’s merciful, unselfish life. . . . They plan and study to please themselves. They act only in reference to self. Time is of value to them only as they can gather for themselves. In all the affairs of life this is their object. Not for others but for themselves do they minister. God created them to live in a world where unselfish service must be performed. He designed them to help their fellow-men in every possible way. But self is so large that they cannot see anything else. They are not in touch with humanity. Those who thus live for self are like the fig-tree, which made every pretension, but was fruitless.” *The Desire of Ages*, 584

# The Ingredients of Love

Love is not one thing, it is many things. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, we find the ingredients of love. In these verses, Paul educates us in what love is and what it is not, what it does and what it does not do.

“Love suffereth long, and is kind.” Have you ever met someone that rubbed you the wrong way? Have you experienced those clashes of personality? What is the remedy? Love suffers long and is kind. Love is patient with those that tend to irritate us. Can you think of time when you did not practice patience and kindness? Think for a moment how things would have been better if you had.

Peter wrote, “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” 1 Peter 2:19-23

 “Love envieth not.” This means that love is not jealous or covetous. “Envy” comes from the Greek word, *zelos*, meaning “to boil.” It produces anger and bitterness. It is the fruit of malice and ill will.

Why does envy arise? It can arise from discontentment with our own life. Competition can lead us to be envious of others who receive more attention and honor.

We must learn to rejoice in the success of others and be content with such as we have. But we should never be content with who we are. We want to become more like Jesus. We want to learn to do things more efficiently and skillfully.

 “Love vaunteth nor itself, is not puffed up.” “To vaunt” and to “puff up” is to inflate you achievements, and to focus on yourself. When money is inflated is it worth more or less? It is worth less. One of the most valuable Christian virtues is humility. Along with humility comes kindness and love. With arrogance comes rudeness and boasting. So love is not arrogant and rude.

The Bible says, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate.” Proverbs 8:13.

Jesus said, “every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:14.

The Lord’s servant wrote, “Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person.” *Mount of Blessing*, 19

“Love doth not behave itself unseemly.” Love is never rude. It is not kind one minute and then rude the next. It does not act irrationally. Rather, love is stable, reasonably, and consistent.

“Love seeketh not her own.” Have you ever wanted your own way? Everyone has. But love does not insist on its own way. Love is reasonable and teachable. It is not selfish.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Philippians 2:3, 4

“Love is not easily provoked.” Love is not given to a quick temper and outbursts of insensitive words. Love trusts that “all things work together for good to them that love God” and “are the called according to his purpose.” Therefore love is not indignant or irritated when trials and tests come their way.

“Love thinketh no evil.” Love does not keep a record of wrongs, but is forgiving. Love is not unnecessarily suspicious and assumes the worst. Love considers the weakness of our flesh, while not excusing the sin.

The Bible says, “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.” Proverbs 10:12

Love does not listen eagerly to unfavorable rumors. Love practices Matthew 18.

Love thinks about good and has a way of looking always looking forward. Paul wrote, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12-14

We can do ourselves great harm by focusing on our failures and the unpleasant things of the past. We cannot change the past, but we all have a future. So it is best to think about where we want to go and what we want to become in Christ Jesus.

“Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” Love does not rejoice when others do wrong or speak wrong. We are not to laugh at the misfortune and mistakes of others. We are to hate what sin and error does to people, while always loving the sinner.

Love is the ability to rejoice, but it rejoices in the truth. It rejoices when people to the right thing and encourages them to continue on the right path. Love rejoices when people choose to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Love is not gloomy or sad, but tries to bring all the happiness it can into the lives of others.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

“Bear” is to have patience (Rev 14:12) and endurance (James 1:12). Love does help bear the burdens of others. You might even give something up that another can be blessed.

“Believes” is to have full trust in God, to believe the best of others, and to believe the truth and to reject error. It doesn’t mean that you believe everything you hear, but you put on your Berean glasses and test all things with the Word of God.

“Hopes” is to inspire hope in others. Never consider any situation or person as hopeless. Everyone has the potential of becoming a son and daughter of God.

“Love never fails.” True love never fails because it bears, believes, hopes and endures all things. Love never fails to reach out to suffering humanity. It never fails to trust in God. It never fails to represent Jesus aright with kindness and gentleness. Love simply does not fail because God is love.

Compiled by Pastor Jeff Wehr