



Love Fulfills the Law

October 12, 2025

Romans 13:8-10

(Video 38:48)

Well, I want you to open again, as we've been doing for a long time now, your Bibles to the Book of Romans, to Romans chapter 13. You may, however, want to keep a finger where I had Justin at least read a few verses in Psalm 119 because we're going to take a quick look at Psalm 119 again here very shortly. If you have been a student of scripture, if you've been under the preaching teaching of a student of scripture or anyone who preaches the word of God, or if you've just read the Bible very much for a long period of time, you have read many times, meditated on and perhaps taught yourself the truths that we're gonna start looking at today in Romans 13:8-10. And just to orient you to that little passage, take a look in Romans 13:8-10. Paul writing under the auspices of the Holy Spirit says, ***Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.*** And I'll stop right there.

And that's why I'm so thankful that Brian underscored hymns that underscore the love of God and love. Love, as we will see, is the key, if you will, to obedience. It was Michael Griffith who's written a lot of good books, but he made this quote that I thought was so insightful: *Enthusiasm is much easier than obedience.* Isn't that the case? It's a lot easier to get excited about a project sometimes than to carry out the project. When it comes to the spiritual life, enthusiasm is a whole lot easier than obedience. I think Paul himself would say a hearty amen to that. What did we learn in Romans chapter seven? *The good that I want to do, I don't do, and the bad things I don't want to do, he says, I do. Oh wretched man that I am.* That's a guy writing that after walking with the Lord approximately 30 years or so. And so enthusiasm, indeed, is a lot easier than obedience.

If I could boil the Christian life down to one word, that would be it, by the way. It would be 'obedience'; following the truth of God, obeying the word of God, obeying the scriptures, doing what the scriptures tell us to do in every situation of life. And you know, oftentimes you hear the phrase, 'Let go and let God'. Well, really, it's not specifically in the Bible. There's an element of truth in that, but I think there's more untruth in it. There's an element of truth in the sense that you can't live the Christian life outside of the control and the direction of the Holy Spirit; God dwelling in you. You can't do it in and of yourself. But I think most people take that phrase, 'let go and let God', with the idea that I just sort of sit by and do nothing and let God do it all, and there's no work or holy sweat, if you will, involved. There's a tremendous amount of effort on our part to obey the word of God that is called for. Guided and directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be sure, but effort none the less.



You know, obedience, usually to a child, at least, is a fearful word. A child, generally, when he's told to obey, you are interrupting his will. You're interrupting what he wants to do by telling him to do something else. And sad to say, when people grow out of childhood into adulthood, a lot of times they carry that same problem with them. As a non-believer, I was never frustrated in terms of trying to please God. I thought I was a pretty good guy. It's only when I came to know Christ that the battle started. That's why I really appreciate the fact that if you're having frustration in your Christian life, if you're struggling in some area of your Christian life, you say, "I really am striving to want to do it God's way, but it seems like I fail so often." Be encouraged. To me, that is clear evidence that you're genuinely born again. I think it's one of the best evidences that you're born again. A heart that desires to do the will of God is a redeemed heart.

Take a look again at Psalm 119. We won't spend much time in it, but the reason why I wanted Justin to read those scriptures and the reason why I wanted to pick out a few verses from it is I think it's the greatest statement, or series of statements, ever made by any child of God relative to the heart desire for obedience. Look at Psalm 119. Let's just grab some at random. Verse 10, ***With all my heart I have sought thee.*** Look at verse 16, ***I will delight myself in thy statutes. I will not forget thy word.*** Look at verse 20, ***My soul breaks for the longing that it hath unto thine ordinances at all times.*** Look down at verse 24, ***Thy testimonies are my delight.*** Verse 33, ***Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes and I shall keep it unto the end.*** Verse 34, ***Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law. Yea, I will observe it with my whole heart.*** Verse 35, ***Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.*** He's crying out, begging God to make him obey His word. Look at verse 40, ***Behold, I have longed after thy precepts; give me life in Your righteousness.*** Verse 45, ***I will walk at liberty for I seek Thy precepts.*** The only freedom he wants is the freedom to be able to obey the word of God. Look at verse 4, ***I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved.*** Well, there's so many. Look at verse 97. 97 sums it up. ***Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*** It goes on and on and on and on.

By the way, I cataloged him. He uses 10 different words to underscore the scriptures, the word of God, and he repeats them over and over and over again all the way through Psalm 119. He calls it *judgments, commandments, precepts, ways, statutes, word, law, ordinances, testimonies, word of truth*, all of them simply euphemisms, or alternate words, if you will, for the scriptures, for the word of God. Now, did David live a perfect life? We know that he didn't. We know of some of the horrific sins that David committed. And yet, what's got a man after God's own heart, he had a heart desire to please Almighty God. The mark of genuine salvation is to have a consuming passion, to want to obey, to have a love for the will and the word of God. You won't have it perfectly. You won't have it perhaps as greatly now as you matriculate and grow through life and sanctification as you may have it next year or two years from now. But if you don't have any desire in your heart to want to obey the word of God and to strive to obey it, then you genuinely need to examine your soul because you're



not in the faith. Because if the Holy Spirit has indwelt a human being's heart and soul, the Holy Spirit will prompt you to desire, to want to live your life for Almighty God.

So, one of the things that people miss, they say, wait a minute, you're talking about obeying the word of God. We're not into legalism here. You taught us, John, in great detail in Romans five, that we stand in grace. And what did it say in Romans six? I'm free, I'm no longer bound to the law in that regard. Are we, or are we not, obligated to keep the moral law of God? When I say moral law of God, just think 10 commandments, okay? Everything but keeping the Sabbath because every one of the 10 commandments, by the way, is repeated again in the New Testament. Are we bound to [it]? We're not bound to the moral law of God in terms of its penalty, in terms of its ability to sentence you and I to spiritual death. Romans 8:1 ***There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*** Remember, we studied all of that. No longer does the moral law of God (don't covet, don't steal, don't commit adultery, whatever) no longer does that law have a power over you to sentence you to death spiritually; to sentence you and me to an eternal hell. Why? Because Christ has paid the penalty. So in that sense, we're totally free from the moral law of God. However, that becomes a misnomer in many people's minds because it does not free us from the precepts of that law, from the command to obey that law. What does Jesus say? ***If you love Me, keep my commandments.*** It's evidence of love for God that you want to desire to keep His law, to keep His holy word. We're free from the law in the sense of its power. We're not free from our obligation to obey it.

Well, how are we gonna do that? He told us. He told us later on in Romans 8. He says the law of the spirit of life in us, the Holy Spirit of God enables us to do so. What if we repeated over and over again in Philippians 2:12-13, ***For it is God who is at work in you, and me, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*** That's what he talks about, working out your salvation. There's an effort to this, but it's an effort that is prompted by the Spirit of God in a life. If you truly are indwelt by God, the Holy Spirit, you will have a desire to do this. I love, there was a lady one time stood up in a, actually it was in a Wednesday night prayer service, but she had only been a Christian about a week or so, and she made a comment. She said, "I'm struggling to, in my Christian walk, when does it end?" And I love what the pastor said. The pastor said, "It ends one of two situations. When the Lord returns and you're raptured, or when you die and go to be with Him. Until then, the war goes on." And she said, and actually she let out an audible gasp. She said, "Oh!" as if she was crushed over that. He says, "No, no, no, let me encourage you with something. First of all, that is a sure sign that you genuinely know Christ. And second of all, you will get victory over time." That's the sanctifying work of the spirit of God in your life. You will overcome the flesh little by little, point by point.

Okay, well, remember the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans, we had all this orthodoxy. He gave us 11 chapters of the mercies of God, all the mercies of God that flow to us as a result of our justification, of our coming to know Christ. Then he starts giving us orthopraxy. He starts giving us the practical application of it all, starting in Romans 12



through the end of the book, okay? And we saw all of that. First of all, he starts out, you know, ***present your bodies living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service of worship.*** He explains **our right relationship to God**, what that looks like, what we're to do.

- Then he talks about in verse two of Romans 12, a right **relationship to the world**.
- Then in verses three through eight, he talked about our right **relationship to the church**, our spiritual giftedness, and using it to minister to others and so forth.
- You'll remember then in verses nine through 21, he goes on in chapter 12 and tells us how to have a right **relationship with everybody else**.
- And then he starts in chapter 13, that we saw the last few weeks, verses one through seven, telling us how to have a right **relationship to government**. And he ends by telling us to pay our taxes.

Now he's gotten to verse's eight through 10, and he's telling us now how you have a right **relationship with all the rest of society**. And the key thing in this relationship is exactly what was underscored in our hymn time this morning: Love, love. Love is the key to obedience. Back in our section in Romans 13:8-10, he mentions two times there we're told that love is the fulfillment of the whole law. And there's a neat little outline. It's not original with me. I took it out of one of the commentaries, but I wanna give you this outline for this week and next. We'll hang our hat on as we go through this.

- In verse eight, you see the **debt of love**.
- And then in verse nine through the first half of verse 10, you see the **discharge of love**, how it plays out, if you will.
- And then at the end of verse 10, you see the **design of love**.

And I like that alliteration there, the debt of love, the discharge of love, and the design of love.

But he starts out in verse eight, and he says, ***Owe nothing to anyone except to love [one another]***. And that's been taken out of context and so forth. He's just talked about paying your taxes. And some people take that out of context and say, does that mean we're not allowed to borrow anything? And we're not gonna get off on that. But the scriptures do not have any prohibitions, they tell you to be wise in your borrowing and so forth, be wise in your lending and so forth, but there's no prohibition against appropriate borrowing and appropriate lending in the scriptures. If you wanna see some verses on that, take a look at Exodus 22:25 sometime, Leviticus 25:35-37, Deuteronomy 23:19-20, Deuteronomy 15, Psalm 37, Proverbs 19:17, and even the Lord's parable of the talents in Matthew 25. All of those passages talk about lending. It says, don't necessarily charge interest to a brother in need if he's coming to you for a need. It's okay to charge a fair interest in other situations. Just don't be usurious and things like that. So when he says, ***owe nothing to anyone except to love***, basically what he's saying is pay your debts, but guess what? There's one debt



you're never gonna pay off. You will never ever pay off your and my obligation to love, to love. And he's gonna expand on what that means. It's a debt you constantly owe. I love what Rigan, an early church father said this: *The debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us. This is a debt which we pay every day and which we forever owe the debt of love.* Paul here is saying, this is something we owe to everyone in society. We owe everyone around us. This is something that marks our life. And you know, we've studied, you've heard it probably most of your Christian life. They will know we are Christians by our love. I quoted Jesus a moment ago saying, *if you love Me, you'll keep my commandments.* 1 John [3:23], ***And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*** 1 John 4:7, ***Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God;*** 1 John 4:21, ***And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.*** The mark of a Christian is that he loves. We get it, we've heard it. But the question becomes, how do I demonstrate that, Paul? And Paul is going to tell us. I mean, **what is love**? Is it a warm and fuzzy feeling? What exactly does it consist of?

Now, if you asked me that question, I would have said, well, be good to people. Be kind to people. Well, that's a part of it. But there are so many more detailed aspects in how you and I are to purposely demonstrate love within, and without the body of Christ, literally to everyone in every situation. And the first one is this: A person genuinely demonstrates love or wants to genuinely demonstrate love, he will **tell people the truth**, teaching others the truth of God. That is a supremely important element in love. It's in 2 Corinthians 6:6-7, you don't need to turn there, but in 2 Corinthians 6:5-7 Paul says, ***but in everything, commending ourselves as servants of God in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments...***, and he goes on and so forth, ***in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love...*** Genuine, genuine love as one who speaks the truth. Ephesians 4:15, ***speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.*** You know, a lot of people don't think about that. Loving individuals is a matter of teaching them the truth, telling them the truth from the word of God in every situation, the gospel certainly, but all aspects of the word of God, it is speaking truth into people's hearts and minds. Think about what we said, it's actually the essence of worship. Romans 12:1-2, ***present your bodies a living sacrifice...*** What's he go on in verse two and say? ***And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your*** what? ***Mind***, truth, truth needs to go into the mind. John 1:14, what's it say? ***The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*** John 17:17, right before the cross, His high priestly prayer, Father, ***sanctify them in the truth, Your word is truth***, truth. So there's so many aspects I could say to that other than speaking the truth in love is the essence of demonstrating love to other individuals.

Second, it involves **ministering to the needs of others**. I was sharing this with Teri that I love this verse, she does too, Hebrews 6:10. You demonstrate love when you minister to the needs of others. It's not just giving them facts, it's ministering to real needs of real people.



Hebrews 6:10, **For God is not unjust so as to not forget your work**, there's work to it, He will not forget your work, and get this, **and the love which you have shown toward his name**, how? **in having ministered and in still ministering** to the needs of **the saints**. Hebrews 6:10. Your labor of love and your work of love is your ministry to the needs of the saints. So loving is teaching people what they need to know in any situation from the only truth there is, the word of God, and ministering and meeting real needs. What's the famous line? They will not care how much you know until they know how much you care. It's so true.

Third aspect of, third aspect of how love is genuinely demonstrated from a scriptural perspective. It's because of your careful behavior, really, love is to **set an example**. Love sets an example. Galatians 5:13, Paul writing to the Galatians says this, **For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another**. And then verse 14, I thought was interesting. **For the whole law**, he's gonna say, the whole law **is fulfilled in one word, in the statement**. He doesn't say the whole law is fulfilled in one statement. He says the whole law is fulfilled in one word in the statement, and then he gives you the statement. What's the statement? **YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**. What's the one word, the word of God itself underscores as the most critical word in that passage, and there again it is love. Love your neighbor as yourself.

By the way, that has been taken out of context and used so often. "So, you see right there, you really have to pump yourself up and have a real good self-image of yourself, because how can you love somebody as yourself if you don't love yourself?" That is not what that verse of scripture supports or says. What that verse of scripture does is assume that in our fallen depravity, we're always gonna look out for number one. In our selfishness, we're always gonna make sure we take care and love ourself to the denigration of anybody and everybody else around us if necessary. So it assumes our depravity, and so he says, you love others the way you already love yourself.

I love what one commentator was saying in terms about ministry. It wasn't a commentator saying it, but we pray, as you know, for Choices Pregnancy Center. We pray for the Matthew 25 Project. We pray for the Phoenix Rescue Mission without fail Sunday in and Sunday out here in our worship services, and that is exactly what those agencies are striving to do. They're trying to meet needs of other individuals, but what do we always pray for? But always as a platform to meet the greatest needs to tell people the truth from the word of God. But for you and me, it's to curb our Christian liberty so that we never do anything that causes another to stumble. We are to set the highest example possible of personal holiness.

Let me give you another fourth aspect of love. Love **covers a multitude of sins**. 1 Peter 4:8, **love covers a multitude of sins**. Actually, that's a quote from Proverbs 10:12. It doesn't preclude church discipline of an unrepentant brother or confronting somebody who's in sin or something like that. It means that a Christian should overlook sins against him if possible,



always ready to forgive insults and unkindnesses. Let's face it, we're all a little weird. We all have our own idiosyncrasies. We all do things that offend or rub somebody else wrong, and our culture has gotten out of control with this anger and resentment. We as believers in Christ have a fabulous opportunity to literally return such slights and insults and harsh thinkings with the love that God calls upon us to demonstrate to everyone in society. **Love covers a multitude of sins.**

Okay, if you wanna demonstrate love, you always speak the truth in love. You strive to minister to the needs of individuals. You serve others with a cautious behavior, never using your Christian liberty in a way that might give offense or cause others to stumble. You don't get in a big hurry to expose everybody else's faults and sins. You let your love cover those sins to the extent possible. In context, you know what I mean by that.

Let me give you another one. This is a biggie. This is huge, and it's getting more and more, the absence of it, I should say, is getting more and more pronounced in our culture. Love, friends, forgives. Love forgives. Ephesians 4:32. **Be kind to one another, tender-hearted,** and then what's it say? **forgiving one another, just as God in Christ Jesus has forgiven you.** Forgiveness is so unbelievably necessary and needful and is rapidly evaporating from every corner of our culture, it seems like. Are you a forgiving person? Are you really? Isn't, is there one person in your life, maybe back, way back when, that you still have not forgiven? "Well, I can forgive, but I can't forget." If you can't forget, you've never forgiven. Say, well, I don't, I love Spurgeon's quote on this. Spurgeon said this on God's forgiveness of our sins: *It's a wonderful thing when omnipotence, get this, overcomes omniscience. When an omnipotent love will not allow omniscience to remember, I will remember their sins no more.*

I know a few years ago, a couple, three different times probably over the last years, I've told you the story about Clara Barton. Clara Barton, the founder of the Red Cross, but it's a true story and it underscores this principle. You say, well, wait a minute, I'm a human being, I got a mind, and I remember something else Spurgeon said too. He says, God throws our sins over his back. And then he goes on and says, but you know what? Where is that? God's everywhere at all times. God sees everything, knows everything. God doesn't have a back. He's omnipresent everywhere. So basically when he says he throws them over his back, he's basically, they're gone. When it comes to you and me, we're fleshly fallen human beings. How do we... Clara Barton, one time she was crushed deeply, hurt greatly, almost destroyed her ministry through the Red Cross ever getting off the ground. Years later, the woman who had done this horrible thing to her, Clara was in a position where she could get even and where she could literally, and one of her aides came to her and said, hey, Clara, that's so-and-so who did so-and-so. She says, "I don't remember that." She says, Clara, this is the woman who said this and wrote this, and Clara Barton says, "I'm sorry, I don't remember that." Clara, are you out of your mind? This is the woman, and then Clara Barton stopped her and says, "No, no, I'm in my right mind. I don't remember that because I specifically remember forgetting it." And that is exactly where you and I need to go. I hope I got the



quote right because I've always liked the quote. There's that well-known quote. It says, holding onto bitterness, holding onto anger, it's like drinking a cup of poison and expecting the other guy to die. And that is exactly what happens in a spiritual sense. It'll consume you. It'll crush your spiritual life. It'll destroy your prayer life. It literally becomes all-consuming if it's not checked. Love forgives, love forgives. How much? As often as God in Christ, Jesus has forgiven you and me.

By the way, what if the other person doesn't, if they've really done you wrong and they don't seek repentance, they don't seek forgiveness. How do you forgive? Are you just supposed to jump right? There's a horizontal aspect of forgiveness and a vertical aspect of forgiveness. If people don't come and ask for the forgiveness and they're genuinely wrong and so forth, there's no need to do horizontal forgiveness, but the vertical forgiveness in your heart between you and God, you're to instantly let that go, instantly forgive them to Almighty God. And as a matter of fact, you can't fulfill the mandate that we looked at in Romans 12 a few weeks ago about praying for your enemies. If you truly have not forgiven what they have done to you in terms of your relationship with Almighty God.

Okay, a couple more here. Another way love is, biblical love is demonstrated is that **love endures**. Love endures, you know the 1 Corinthians 13, the love passage, you know, love is patient, love is kind, and so on. And it goes on, what's that? And love endures all things, hopes all things. Bears all things. Ephesians 4:2. Let your forbearing or enduring one another, he says, in love. Putting up with things is my way of saying it. Just putting up with a lot of stuff instead of getting angry and upset over it. Love literally, literally endures, endures.

I guess a summary fashion. The big one would be **love actually sacrifices for others**. What did Jesus say? A **greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends**. Then He goes on and says, and **you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you**. The point is love is an action. It teaches, it endures, it ministers, it forgives, it's an action, it's a verb, if you will. Erica Kirk's comment at the funeral service of her late husband, Charlie Kirk. Far as one human being can judge the heart of another, I believe it was sincere. But look at the power of all of the things she said and of all of the things that were done that day. What is the thing that I'm still hearing commentators, non-believers for the most part, on television and in articles still talking about? I don't know how that woman could forgive the man who killed her husband. Friends, love is the magnet that draws the unbelieving world to Christ. And that is exactly why Paul is emphasizing here. This is the heart of Christian living. Well, you say this, and of course the answer to how she or anyone could do that is that naturally you can't. It's gotta be supernatural. It's gotta be above nature. It's got to be something that God does in and through you and me. It's a supernatural working of God through the person of the Holy Spirit. You can only do it because He's given us a new capacity. Well, how do you know? Romans 5:5, **the love of God** has been poured, **is shed abroad**, it says in the King James, I sort of like the King James, has been shed abroad **in our heart**. You have a well, you have an infinite resource, to enable you and me to live this



way. It's called God the Holy Spirit. What's this, the fruit of the Spirit is love, very first one. Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, but love is the very first one, and there's a reason for that. Everything flows from it. That's the only way you can live like that. It is, and the question becomes, okay, it's a well that I can draw from, but **how do I** let my spiritual bucket down, so to speak, and **draw upon this power**?

Well, first thing you need to do is you need to **understand that you actually have that resource**. You know, it's just like whether it's sin or righteousness, it always starts in the mind. That's why it's Reformed Living Bible Church. It always starts in the mind. He says you need to know you have this resource. Ephesians 3:18, Paul says that you **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes** what? All **knowledge**. The love of Christ, which passes knowledge. There's a love, if you will, one commentator said it so well, he said: *There's a love for every experience from the well of God the Holy Spirit resident within you*. So you gotta know that you got it.

What's the second thing in order to draw out and to be able to rely upon and live out this love of God through Christ to the rest of the world? You need to **submit to God the Holy Spirit**. Galatians 5:22, I already said, the fruit of the Spirit is love. What do you mean? That's one of the, I hate Christianese, one of those euphemisms, submit to the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? He's talking about prayer. Literally saying, God, I can't do this, but you live within me. I can't love these people. I can't do, but you, Father, are able to enable me to do it. You have not because you ask not. And there we are again. Submit to the Holy Spirit in prayer. 1 Peter 4:7 is a good passage on that. We don't need to go there.

Let me give you a third one. 1 Peter 1:22 says this. **Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently**. What's that mean? What he's saying is, **purify your heart**. One of the reasons why you and I don't have the capability to have this supernatural love is because we're harboring a sin in our own heart. That grudge, that anger, that bitterness, that upset over that insult or whatever it might be. Examine your own heart. Ask God to take away any, or show you first of all, and then take away any aspect of bitterness that you still might have. Until you see your own bitterness, your own anger, your own upset, discomfort, hatred, whatever term you want to put on, for other individuals, until you see that in your life as sin, you will never, ever, ever get the victory and the power that you need to love in this manner. Joy, blessing, and power are three legs of a four-legged chair that the Christian life is seated on. And the fourth leg is obedience. And to have obedience is to love. And to love is being obedient. And you will never have that if you're not drawing upon the Holy Spirit of God. And one of the key ingredients is asking for it and repenting of your own sin, and mine. I mentioned 1 Peter 4:7 a minute ago. That's another key thing to keep in mind. 1 Peter 4.7, he says this, **But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober-minded and watch unto**, what? **Prayer**, watch unto prayer. And we already talked about prayer. But what he's saying, the end of all things is at hand.



You know what he's saying? There's an urgency to this. Time's running out. Drop the gloves and start embracing people. Time is running out. Your time is short and the world's time is short, if you will. One commentator put it this way. He says: *It's time for us to live the way we ought to live. It's time for us to attract people the way they ought to be attracted, living a life of love and recognizing the urgency of it.* Let me give you another one, Colossians 3:14. He says, and **beyond all these things**, Paul says, **put on love**. I've always wondered about that phrase, put on love. Well, that's really what we're talking about here. But you know what that really tells me? Love's not a feeling. Love's a choice. Love is a decision beforehand. Love is a decision that we make. It is a conscious choice. We choose to do it.

I'll give you another aspect that's important if you're gonna demonstrate love and if you wanna draw on this resource of the Holy Spirit to enable you and I to live more out what biblical love really means and looks like. This is a little bit somewhat strange to some of you might think strange. You know what it is? **Don't isolate yourself**. Don't be a lone ranger Christian as the phrase goes. Do not forsake the assembling together of the brethren. Have regular fellowship, live in community with other believers in Jesus Christ. Why? Hebrews 10:24 says, in that manner, by when we do that, what do we do? We don't forsake the assembling together of ourselves with other believers in Christ. Because those relationships, it says stimulate us to what? Love and good deeds. The word 'stimulate' there, actually we get the word *paroxic* from it. It literally means it causes us to vomit out love and good deeds. Relationship with, they hold us accountable. They give us, many times you give me tremendous examples of what it looks like to sacrificially love others within and without the body of Christ. And that in and of itself, it encourages my soul. It tells me that, you know, John, you can do this. Look at what so-and-so is putting up with. Look at what they are dealing, look at the way they responded to that horrible mistreatment. The only way they could do that, John is the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Follow their example, you do it too. And that's what living in community with other believers is why it's so critical. It's a stimulation of love that occurs.

By the way, along those lines, one powerful passage of scripture, I already quoted it earlier, at least the latter part of it, **concentrate on others**. Concentrate on others. That's a choice again, you make. Well, where are you getting that one? Well, Philippians 2, again, Philippians 2:1, just listen, you're familiar with most of it. You know, it's so oftentimes, you're not hearing something that in many ways you don't already know. But there's something about the dynamic of hearing God's word poured into your heart that God uses to encourage us. Philippians 2:1, **if therefore there's any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the spirit, if any affection and compassion, love, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love**, he hits love all through this, **united in spirit, intent on one purpose**. What's that? **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, let each of you regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests**. He doesn't say don't look out for your own personal interests.



He says, do not just look out for your own personal interests, ***but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus.***

Let me give you one more. **Consider the results.** If you're gonna, it'll enable you to draw upon the Holy Spirit of God to live out love to others. So what do you mean considering the results? 1 John 4:19. What's it say? ***We love Him, because He first loved us.*** One commentator put it this way. He said: *Love given is inevitably love returned.* What have we always said? If you want a good friend, be the kind of friend that you want others to be to you.

Okay, there's so much more to unpack on. We just got started on the first half of the first verse here, but we'll finish up, Lord willing, next week, but let me give you maybe a little practical assignment, a few list of things you could pick and choose from to maybe start implementing some of this in your life this week. One is pretty obvious. If you got a quarrel with someone, mend that quarrel, just mend it. Search out a forgotten friend. Search out somebody who for whatever reason you've grown distant from and perhaps make that phone call. Replace a suspicion with a trust. Let me give you a couple more. Make sure you not only let an old bitterness die, make sure you kill it. Absolutely repent of it, ask God to forgive that bitterness. This is not necessarily against somebody who is an enemy or a foe. This is just a demonstration of love. Write a note, a card or a letter this week to somebody who would totally unexpected from you. Just tell them how much you appreciate them. Tell them whatever you wanna tell them, but that's one practical way. Encourage someone very well what they mean. Here's another one, and Teri does this to me all the time and I need to be better of it back to her, and to others as well. She constantly expresses a grateful heart. Thank you, John, for this. Thank you, John, for that. Thank you, John, for this. Thank you, John, for that. I wanna be more that way. Go throughout your day, yes, thanking God, but thanking other people. Just common... thank you for being such a hard fellow co-worker at Goodwill or wherever. And whatever it might be, just say "thanks". Tell somebody you love them more than once. Pray for an enemy. Here's one. Doesn't have to be a lot. Most of us don't have a lot. Send a check to somebody who you know has a need who would totally unexpected from you. If it's \$5, just send what you can to somebody who has a need totally out of nowhere. And ask God whatever you do to help you love the way Christ loved, totally unconditionally.

As Brian comes to lead us in a closing hymn, let me close us in a word of prayer. Father, we thank You for allowing us to get started in this portion of scripture. Father, I pray that all of us would be better lovers, that we would love You, love Your word, be more obedient to Your word, and therefore be better lovers to all in society with whom we come into contact. It indeed, Father, has been orchestrated and ordained by You to be the magnet to draw lost, hurting souls to the feet of the cross. Father, may You be pleased to use us to do so. We ask it all again in the matchless name of Jesus the Christ and all God's redeemed people said amen and amen.