

Godly Love

Sydney 2018 Combined Weekend – 3-5 August, 2018

Class 1: The Love of the Father

1. Love is the Essence of the Truth—*Bro. R. Roberts*

“There can be nothing more certain than that the sentiment of love...is at the very bottom of the whole scheme of the truth in which we rejoice; there can be nothing more certain than that the very object of the truth is to manifest God’s love to us, and to develop God’s love in us. There can be nothing more certain than that the truth in its ultimate and eternal development, as we might say, will present the very highest form of this impulse of love; and there can be nothing more certain, either, than that those who are not carried along by this prevailing impulse—which originates the truth, and which we may also say is the essence of the truth—will be left behind.”

“God is love (1 Jn 4:8,16), and it is only in proportion as we remember this that we shall become capable of reflecting this quality. We must remember the whole of the truth, and not a part only. We must not leave out the love. This is our danger. We are not likely to leave out anything else. We see from the Bible that God is angry with the wicked; that corrupt and sinful human nature is nothing in His sight; that Jesus will be manifested to destroy the sinners of mankind, and that there is no salvation except in God’s appointed way. We see the necessity of placing ourselves in opposition to the corruption around us, and are forced into a continual attitude of defense and attack. Therefore we are not liable to forget our duty in these things. But we are liable to forget that God is love and that the whole truth is but the exemplification & expression of it.” (*Christadelphian, 1867, pg 302*)

God is not just loving, He is love itself; love is His essential nature and personality (cp Eph 2:4,7; Titus 3:4; Rom 5:8; 1 Jn 3:1; Jn 16:27; Heb 12:6; 1 Jn 4:10)

Love is the pinnacle of what the Truth is intended to lead us to & develop within us; it’s why Christ died on the cross & why the Bible has been made available for us; all our doctrines, reading/study, singing, prayers, trials, preaching, baptism, ecclesial events, gatherings & Bible Schools are intended to bring us to love – God’s love *God is at work to develop His love within us, the outcome of which is a new heart and a transformed character*

2. The Love of God does not happen naturally, it must be developed and involves much heartache, it –

- 1) asks a 130 year old father to slay his son whom he loves, as a test of his faith
 - 2) asks another father to live with bitter grief for 20 years over the apparent death of his beloved son
 - 3) asks a prophet to refrain from mourning over the death of his wife, the desire of his eyes
 - 4) strikes family tragedy & bodily affliction into a blameless and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil
 - 5) brings a mother from Bethlehem to a Moabite gravesite on 3 occasions (her husband and 2 sons)
 - 6) permits a death warrant to be decreed against the nation after a faithful man refuses to bow before the enemy
 - 7) asks a queen to lay down her life for her people
 - 8) permits a faithful apostle to be persecuted in city after city while he is trying to preach the gospel
 - 9) then leaves him imprisoned for 2 years when he could have been out preaching to more people
 - 10) asks the beloved Son to lay down his life and to submit himself to a public crucifixion
- these events were all done out of God’s love, out of His desire to save those whom He loved; to teach them to walk by faith in the midst of their suffering & to love Him in response to their severe trials; to keep them from being overcome by Sin, or to rescue them from Sin’s domination
- great good came from these painful events: eternal promises; redemption of a family, a generation, the race
- all these faithful encourage us to trust God’s love, to embrace it & learn to reflect it; it is THE only way to life!

3. Godly Love defined; it (is)...

- 1) a ‘self-sacrificing’ love, an ‘others-first, not me-first’ love, a ‘laying down our life’ love (1 Jn 3:16)
 - 2) obedience to God’s commandments— “if you love me you will keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15,21,23)
 - 3) done by faith, springs from (built on) faith, “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6); deepens faith (Jn11:5,25-26)
 - 4) done in hope of a future reward; “as you have shown love, show the same diligence...of hope” (Heb 6:10-11)
 - 5) done not because a person *deserves* our love, but because he *needs* our/God’s love (Rom 5:8)
 - 6) giving to the need, whatever it is, not from our surplus, but based upon a person’s need (Dt 15:8; 2 Cor 8:2,7)
 - 7) requires our total involvement: all our heart, strength, mind (1st comm: Mt 22:37); [#2 without #1 = humanism]
 - 8) does for our neighbour as we would like to have done for us (2nd comm – Matt 22:39-40)
- the parable of the Good Samaritan defines the 2nd comm. Put yourself in your neighbour’s shoes & ask yourself, “if I was in his situation, what would I need for someone to do for me?” Then do it!
- it was the intended outcome of the Law of Moses & the prophets (Matt 7:12; Rom 13:10; Gal 5:14; 1 Jn 4:21)
- 9) done as a servant, not a master (Gal 5:13)
 - 10) restrains us from wrong conduct (Gal 5:15) and compels us to right conduct (2 Cor 5:14)
 - 11) provides a balance between insisting upon right doctrine/conduct (2 Jn 1:6-11) while not offending in matters of conscience, causing some to fall away, for whom Christ died (3 Jn, 1 Cor 8:3-13)
 - 12) does good to all, it is careful not to show partiality (James 2:8-9)

4. The Preeminence of Godly Love

- 1) it's comprehensive, connected to all facets of our discipleship, all that we do is to be done in love (1Cor 16:14)
- 2) it holds a preeminent position in the Word, as Jesus emphasized in his final hours with the 11 (Jn 13-17) & as Paul and Peter urged above all else, that we put on love (Col 3:14; 1 Pet 4:7-8 – the final stage of discipleship)
- 3) it forms a three-fold foundation with faith and hope, but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13)
- 4) it is both *phileo* & *agape* as God had both for His Son (Jn 5:20; 3:35); as Christ had for Lazarus (Jn 11:3; 11:5); as God has for us (Jn 16:27; 14:23); as we should have for one another (1 Pet 1:22)
- 5) can only arise from a proper understanding of God's truth (Phil 1:9)
- 6) Human love, by contrast, seeks to make a person feel good/loved & has a reciprocating expectation – you do for me & I'll do for you; it's a manipulative, transactional love; *human love does, Godly love saves*
- It must not be confused with Christendom's love; prophecy warns human love will prevail in the last days (2 Tim 3:1-5); ***Godly love will always seek to lead a person to righteousness***; to turn, or keep a person from sin
- 7) it has no limits regarding what we should be willing to do for one other, but all must be done within the boundaries of God's commandments, to keep a person from sin or to return a sinner to righteousness

5. Godly Love and Obedience are inseparable—to Love God is to Obey God

Ex 20:6—And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments; obeying the 10 commandments are an expression of how we love God & our neighbor.

Deut 7:9—he is God...keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments.

Josh 22:5—to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments.

Neh 1:5—that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments.

Dan 9:4—keeping the covenant & mercy to them that love him, and keep his commandments.

Jn 14:15—If ye love me, keep my commandments. 21 He that hath my commandments, & keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him. 23 If a man love me, he will keep my words: & my Father will love him, & we will come unto him, & make our abode with him.

Jn 15:10—If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.

1 Jn 2:5—But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

1 Jn 5:3—For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

2 Jn 1:6—And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.

- *God measures our love for Him by our obedience to His Word*

- *the works of the Law, done by the flesh & valued by religious leaders (Pharisees, Judaizers), were worthless*

- *works done by love & arising from faith are what God seeks to develop within us, they are how we glorify God*

6. Faith & Love share a special relationship—Faith proves our Love is Godly love and not human love

Gal 5:6—in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Eph 1:15—Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

1 Thes 1:3—remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope.

1 Thes 3:6—Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love.

1 Thes 5:8—be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

2 Thes 1:3—your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.

1 Tim 1:5—purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith.

1 Tim 2:15—she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

2 Tim 1:13—Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love.

Phile 1:5—hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.

1 Pet 1:7-8—the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, & glory at the revelation of Christ, whom having not seen, you love.

Jms 2:20 – faith without works (obedience/love) is dead; true faith will be completed by Godly love

Luke 7:36-50— the sinful woman came in faith (v50) by love (v47) wanting to break Sin's hold over her; she left with an even greater love, having been forgiven (v42)

7. God's love is the basis for ours; we are to love as He loves; His love is our model and motivation

Dt 10:18-19—He executes judgment for the fatherless, widow & loves the stranger; love ye therefore the stranger

Lk 6:35—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.

Eph 4:32—And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 5:1 Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us.

1 Jn 3:16—hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our life for the brethren.

1 Jn 4:7-8—let us love one another: for love is of God; & every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love... 11 if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, & his love is perfected in us (cp.Jn1:18; 14:8-10 – as God's character could be seen in Christ, so too should it be seen in us, by our love)

God manifestation isn't a theory, it's an expectation – Godly love is intended to bring us to the point whereby we are able to echo Christ's words, "if a person has seen me (my love which is God's love), he has seen God!"

8. Eph. 2:4 – God’s Plan of Redemption: The purpose of His love for us is to lead us to loving Him

- 1) vv1-3: we begin with a **sinful nature**, living in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of our body/mind
- 2) v4: God’s great love to us is shown in the **giving of His Son** (1 Jn 4:9)
- 3) v5: in response to His love (death of Christ) we **repent/baptized** (“quickened together with Christ”)
- 4) God extends His **grace** to us—our redemption is a free gift, not something we can earn
- 5) v8: we live by **faith**, trusting God will forgive/save us if we take on Christ’s name, love, character & teachings
- 6) because it is of faith there is no room for boasting (the ‘works’ of v9 are the works of the flesh)
- 7) v10: the outcome is our **good works** (our love done in faith); being God’s workmanship, the glory is all to Him
We are not saved because of our love, but without our love there is no salvation
All the pieces are necessary; all are needed for the redemption process to achieve its intended outcome
The eternal outcome of the redemptive process is our salvation; the interim outcome is our walking in good works
Redemption begins with God’s love for us (v4) & is completed by/intended to lead us to loving Him (v10)

9. Godly Love is not an emotionless love, it will bring us to tears; real tears flowed when...

Joseph, upon hearing Judah’s confession and his willingness to take Benjamin’s place in prison
Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah wept over the prospect of their parting
Jonathon and David wept upon each other, David more so when they had to depart
Elisha wept, having being shown all the evil that Hazael would do to Israel as king of Syria
Nehemiah wept and mourned for days upon hearing the evil report of the poor spiritual conditions in Israel
The Jews in Nehemiah’s day wept upon hearing Ezra read the Law, realizing how far they had strayed
Job’s 3 friends lifted up their voices and wept upon first seeing Job in his dreadful condition
Good figs of the first captivity sat down and wept for Zion by the waters of Babylon
Esther wept before the king over the prospect of her people being slain under Haman’s decree
The Lord wept upon seeing Mary and others weeping over death of Lazarus
He wept again over Jerusalem’s destruction due to the hardness of Israel’s heart
Paul served the Lord with humility and many tears at Ephesus, warning them night and day with tears
Paul wrote to the Corinthians “out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears”
Paul and the Ephesian elders wept on the beach over the prospect of not seeing one another again
Love & concern for the spiritual well being of others brought the tears & strong emotion, but in a spiritual context

Class 2: The Love of the Son

10. God’s love for us is seen in the giving of His “only begotten Son”

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9

“Only begotten” describes Christ’s character not just his paternity (Jn 1:14); he perfectly manifested the Father
It wasn’t human love the Father had for the Son, He loved him because he was “full of grace and truth”
The Father loved the Son & the world; one had no sin, the other was steeped in it, though all had the same nature
The solution was for the sinless Son, out of love for his Father to provide a covering for Sin by laying down his life
The Father took that which He highly valued & out of His love for us, asked the Son to offer himself (Rom 5:6-8)
The Father and Son did not do it all, we still have a part; “whosoever believeth” and “we might live through him”
Our love is added to the love of the Father and Son

11. Substitution supposes the Cross was a result of God’s anger, not His love; it teaches –

False Teaching { a) because of Sin, God was angry with man and
b) therefore man deserves to be punished and to die for his guilt;
c) but instead of slaying man, God substituted Jesus, placing upon him the sins/punishment due man;
d) therefore, Jesus died to appease an angry God, the innocent victim suffering in place of the guilty

In Truth, there was no anger, punishment or guilt associated with the Son’s sacrifice on the cross
The Father was at work in the Son, helping to destroy Sin’s power over him (2 Cor 5:18-19)
The Son wasn’t suffering for the guilty, he needed the cross to perfect his faith (Heb 5:7-9)
God does not ask us to endure trials which have no spiritual benefit for ourselves
The Son wasn’t a victim, he was the first to benefit from his victory over sin
But his motivation was selfless, he died “for us” because he loved us & gave himself for us (Gal. 2:20; Eph 5:25)
God wasn’t angry with the world (Jn 3:17), He didn’t send the Son to condemn it, but to save it
The Son was sent into the world to condemn Sin (Rom 8:3) and to save people; so too are we; this doesn’t
conflict with our need to “love not the world” that is, the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life (1 Jn 2:15-16)

12. Jesus stressed the need for love in the final hours with the 12 disciples – John 13-17

13:1 – he loved them “to the end” (to the uttermost); he loved them to the ultimate
He was going away and his departure would create a massive void in the group, none could fill his shoes
He stressed the need for them to love one another during his absence, as he had loved them (13:34-35;15:12,17)
Though he’d send the Comforter, it wouldn’t replace his love, it wouldn’t settle disputes & stop the bickering
Only by their learning to love each other would the void be filled; washes their feet to highlight the need for love
He loves his enemy, using the others’ bewilderment over the betrayal, to appeal to Judas without revealing him

13. The Parable of the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep – John 10

The highest form of love is a man laying down his life for his friends (Jn 15:13)
Why do this? It was a command he received from the Father (John 10:18)
The Father’s reaction to the Son’s obedience? He loved the love of His Son! (v17)
The Good Shepherd puts the needs of the flock first, before his own needs, even at the cost of his life
He does so to “bring life for the sheep” (v10)
The hireling by contrast, flees in the face of danger & puts his own needs first; unwilling to show Godly love (v12)
The religion of the day did not encourage this Godly love, the religious leaders only served for personal gain

14. Three principles define Godly love: and the need to lay down one’s life

1) a death occurs, 2) the death is offered willingly, 3) so others benefit
This is Godly love; it is how God defines love and it’s what He loves!
Godly love involves a self-sacrificial death: a) the needs of others are put first and b) it is a willing sacrifice
The temptation related to Godly love is to flee (the death), putting one’s own needs ahead of the needs of others

Class 3: The Wisdom of Godly Love

15. The Good Shepherd love (laying down our life) is what God expects each of us to develop 1Jn 3:16-17

This highest form of love, shown by the Son, is what God expects ALL His children to develop in their life
We love our brethren by laying down our life for them
There is: 1) a death each of us must die; 2) willingly; 3) so others benefit from my sacrificial love
It is not a literal, physical death; it’s a spiritual death, a death to Sin; we die to Sin by putting others’ needs first
The lesson of the cross was that Sin must be put to death, not just in Jesus, but in all who seek to follow him
My natural desires, my lusts, my flesh, must be crucified before I can live unto righteousness
The cross (crucifying the flesh) is what must be done to Sin & Godly love is how we do it!
v17 – I lay down my life when I do for others, giving to their needs, not my own
This is what Godly love looks like when it is practiced – if we fail to do it, God’s love is not in us
The death we die to Sin must be linked to a benefit to others
If our doing for others does not involve a death to Sin taking place, we are not laying down our life
If we take care of others after we take care of ourselves, this is human love, not Godly love
A divine warning: it’s easy to know and speak of Godly love; but it must be lived (v18)

16. Christ set this expectation for all his disciples in his final moments with the 11 – John 15

He stresses 4xs their need to love him by keeping his commandments; 5xs their need to love one another
There was no outer limit to the love they should have for one another (v13)
In these final hours he is not merely drawing attention to himself and how great his love had been for them
His principle focus is showing them the extent to which they ought to be willing to love each other
After his departure they will face great challenges, the world will hate them (v18, cp early chapters in Acts)
The only way to survive such challenges, with their leader absent, will be for them to learn to love one another
v12 is the command to follow his example; v13 is a reminder of his unlimited love; v14 is the expectation he sets
We are Jesus’ friends only if we do what he commands, and he commands us to love one another as he loved
The Father’s (1J4:11) & Son’s expectations & tests are identical; their love for us should be our love for 1 another
Godly love is not a burden, it’s a joy (v11) as it helps to save those who are overcome by Sin

17. The Love of Ruth for Naomi – Ruth 1:16-17

Her decision to remain with Naomi was foolish by the world’s standard, but Godly love oftentimes is
She united herself to Naomi’s hardships and trials, she freely chose this way of life
Her love for Naomi was unlimited, a person couldn’t love Naomi any more than Ruth did
Like the Good Shepherd, she willingly laid down her life to spiritually benefit Naomi in a self-sacrificing love
She loved both in deed and in truth (1 Jn 3:18)
Ruth understood the lesson of the cross – to put the flesh to death and become a servant of others
Ruth’s love was shown in the midst of her own personal trials (widowhood, poverty, isolation from family)
She developed Godly love in Moab, before ever setting foot in Israel; she brought her love with her
Her commitment to love and serve Naomi was bound up in her commitment to love and serve God

18. The Love of Jonathan for David, for Saul, and David's love for Saul – 1 Samuel

Jonathan was next in line to the throne, he'd have natural inclinations to be king and was groomed for this. He declared his allegiance to David giving him his weapons, garments and the throne; because he loved he gave. It was a covenant of love Jonathan made with David (18:3; 20:16)

He laid down his life, dying to sin, putting to death his natural desire for the throne, for David's/nation's benefit

He loved his neighbor (15:28) as himself; picturing himself in David's position and then giving to that need

He freely chose to become David's servant; while Saul told David, "you're mine," Jonathan's view: "I'm yours"

Saul, by contrast, rejected Godly love, refusing to lay down his life; he repeatedly sought to take David's life

Jonathan's love for David was Godly love, not human love; there was no reciprocating expectation

His love for David was without limits, he was prepared to do for David whatever was needed (20:4)

Jonathan also had Godly love for Saul, never abandoning his father and literally laying down his life for him

David spent 10+ years as a fugitive, loving Saul; fleeing from him while trying to win him back to righteousness

David willingly laid down his life for Saul, putting his own life at risk, as a servant, for Saul's spiritual benefit

Jonathan and David both loved Saul with Godly love, though Saul ultimately was unresponsive to their pleas

19. Godly Love unites 2 key principles of discipleship: 1) crucifying the flesh + 2) serving others

These 2 principles found application in Christ's life (Mk 10:45) & are intended to do the same in our life (Gal 4:13)

This is how God saves us, not based upon our own merit, but by transforming our character

He knows that to break Sin's power over us we must be willing to learn to lay down our life for the sake of others;

to live for *their* spiritual well being, putting *their* needs before our own, doing for *them*, not for ourselves

20. The Power of Godly Love is Greater than the Power of Sin – Jn 14:30-31

Sin (prince of this world – Jn 12:31; 16:11; Eph 2:2) had no power over Christ even though present in his nature

He too struggled with powerful temptations, both from within and without

But there was another power at work in his life, a power stronger than sin – his love for his Father

His witness to the world, "my love for my Father has rendered Sin powerless in my life" (Jn 14:30-31)

His victory over the prince of this world by love, calls all his disciples to the same battle (Jn 12:32)

If I want to be helpful to my brothers/sisters, Sin must first be put to death in my life, I can't let it dominate me

Personal experience teaches us that when Godly love is missing in a relationship, Sin wins and Sin reigns

When a spiritual relationship is broken it is critical that Godly love be inserted

Love is most needed where it is the least deserved and appreciated

21. Sin is overcome by Godly Love – 1 John 3

The love of the Father is intended to purify us now, since we will be made like Christ when he comes (v1-3)

The Son appeared to take away our sins (v5), to destroy the works of the devil (i.e. the practice of sin) (v8)

We are either children of God or the devil, the determining factor is not our baptism, it is our love! (v10)

The children of God practice righteousness (1st commandment) and love their brother (2nd commandment)

By loving others we pass from death (sin's domination) to life (practicing righteousness) during probation (v14)

Jesus destroyed the works of the devil (v8) by love (v16), the same victory he declared in Jn 14:30-31

The danger of the Antichrist teaching (i.e. Jesus didn't come in the flesh) was that it nullified the need for Christ

destroying the devil by love; & in so doing undermined/eliminated the need for brethren to love one another

22. The Unconquerable Power of the Love of the Father + the Love of the Son + our Love – Rom 8

v28 – the "good" that all things work together for is our eternal good – sharing God's Holiness (Heb 12:10)

– to love God in the midst of trial is to remain faithful to Him and to obey Him, regardless of what befalls us

v29 – God selected us in advance to be part of the redeemed host who are to be glorified with Christ

v32 – God's love in not sparing His Son but giving him up (to death) for us

v34 – Christ's love in laying down his life, now having been raised to join his Father in heaven, to intercede for us

v35 – our love is added to the love of the Father and the love of the Son by remaining obedient under trial

v37-39 – When God's love + Christ's love + our love unite together there is great power for good over Sin

– nothing can conquer the power of Godly love, Sin will not prevail over us so long as we continue in Godly love

Exhort: A More Excellent Way

23. The Value of Godly Love far surpassed that of the spirit gifts

Spirit gifts were being misused, causing division instead of the edification they were intended for (Eph 4:12)
The Corinthians wrongly viewed spirit gifts as the pinnacle of discipleship; Paul shows the pinnacle is Godly love
Paul shows how Godly love is the answer to ecclesial disharmony or to a dysfunctional ecclesia
Paul, being a possessor of spirit gifts could give personal testimony to the surpassing value of Godly love

24. What Godly Love looks like when put into practice – 1 Cor. 13

Godly love is intended to be a way of life, not a series of isolated events; it should impact how we think, act, make decisions and interact with each other and all other people
It is a better way to live: to build a marriage, raise a family, behave in the ecclesia, conduct ourselves at work
If Heb 11 is a description of what faith will lead to in a believer's life, 1 Cor 13 describes what love will lead to
v1: if you don't first have love, don't try to use your spirit gift, it's better to remain silent
v2: the danger of gaining knowledge without having love – we are of no value to God
v3: the danger of giving all to others, even to the extreme of giving our life, if done without love, is without profit
Paul's warning: we can spend a lifetime in the Truth, working in the ecclesia, and it can all be done without love
How do we know if we have Godly love or are simply being self-deceived by our knowledge & actions? The answer is in vv4-7 – this is what Godly love is and what it does
These are the same positive & negative aspects of love reflected in Christ's life (insert 'Christ' for 'love' in ch13)
These attributes harmonize with the character of God (Ex. 34:6); it's what love looks like & what God looks like

25. Godly Love (is) –

suffereth long – is patient (RSV); willing to wait upon the Lord; not in a hurry, knows spiritual matters take time
kind – Gk: useful to others; linked with forgiveness (Eph 4:32); covers sins (Prov 10:12; Jms 5:20; 1 Pet 4:8)
not envious – doesn't want what others have, is completely content; only wants what's spiritually best for others
not vaunt itself – (parade-NKJ; boastful-RSV); doesn't publicize its achievements (sharp contrast to social media)
not puffed up – Gk: to inflate; associated with pride/arrogance; there's no room for pride with Godly love
not behave itself unseemly – (rudely-NKJ); not act in a way that will cause others to sin or be disgraced (7:36)
seeketh not her own – doesn't insist on its own way, in anything; spiritual joy is found in giving, not seeking
not easily provoked – doesn't take offence (Ps 119:165); when we are 'offended', we have stopped loving
thinketh no evil – (resentful-RSV) Gk: take inventory; doesn't keep score of evil done against it; instead forgives
rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth – hates iniquity and loves righteousness (Heb 1:9)
bears all things – Gk: to cover with a roof; fig: to protect by covering with silence; knows when to remain silent
hopes all things – love never gets discouraged, it never gives up, regardless of the circumstances
endures all things – for the sake of the elect, in order to save them (2 Tim 2:10; Heb 12:2)
bears/believes/hopes/endures all things – it's not naïve or easily fooled, but perseveres under every circumstance; there is no situation we can find ourselves in that should prevent us from showing Godly

Class 5: The Power of Godly Love (as evidenced in the lives of faithful men & women)

26. Esther shows Godly Love does not happen naturally – Esther 4

At the outset she is not prepared to risk her life for her people, and is thinking only of herself & family
Haman's (Sin's) decree caused Esther to respond in a very natural, self-centered, me-first manner
She refuses Mordecai's initial request to go to the king, fearing for her life
Mordecai responds by exposing her selfish thinking and her faith in the walls of the palace, not in God
He reminds her that God will accomplish His Will, and encourages her to be a part of it
Mordecai had already laid down his life for his people (ch3), now he is asking Esther to do the same
He doesn't force her, Godly love can't be forced, but done willingly; she must choose btw Godly & human love
By the end of the chapter she is ready to go to the cross, displaying the highest form of Godly love
She lays down her life by crucifying the flesh and becoming a servant of her people, to save them
In so doing Haman (Sin) is ultimately rendered powerless over her, the prince of the world is cast out
What changed between v11 and v16? Only one aspect – her human love was replaced by Godly love!
The power of her Godly love was greater than the power of Sin present in her life

27. Joseph reveals the power of Godly Love to overcome the hatred of one's own brethren

Godly love was THE motivation for his interactions with his brethren and he grasped its importance by age 17
His actions reveal how Godly love responds in a situation of intense hatred by those overcome by sin
He continually returned good for evil because the power of his Godly love was greater than the evil
He continually loved his neighbors as himself, even when they could not speak peaceably to him; he rightfully identified what they needed (for him to remain loving) and gave to their need
22 years later, it was his love for them in ch37 that helped win them back to righteousness & to forsake their sin
He never saw them as anything other than lost sheep, he did not view them as false brethren, rather, lost brethren
His example shows we should never cease to love a lost brother, regardless of his animosity toward us

28. The power of Godly Love transformed Judah, his was the love of Christ

He willingly laid down his life, putting the needs of others before his own, so that they might spiritually benefit

He loved Benjamin in deed and in truth, not in word or in tongue

His love sprang from his faith, he obeyed God in the midst of severe trial, trusting God would work things out

He loved his neighbor as himself, and did for his brother what he would have needed, had he been imprisoned

He wasn't born with Godly love, it had to be learned over time, but he came to embrace it as the way to life

Godly love transformed Judah's character, making him into a new person with a new heart

The power of Godly love in his life was greater than the power of Sin

His love was the love of Christ – "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend"

His love united the two key principles of discipleship: 1) crucifying the flesh and 2) serving others

His Godly love became an unconquerable power in his life, he was a super-conqueror in God's strength

29. Peter learns about and embraces Godly love – John 21

Jesus teaches Peter that love is ①serving others & ②a willingness to lay down your life for their benefit (Mk 10:45)

Peter had boldly declared his (human) love for Jesus, on the night of the betrayal, then fled as a hireling (Jn 10)

In Jn 21, Jesus has a probing conversation with Peter & it's all about Godly love; Peter declares his human

love for Jesus, 3 times; but what he needed was to embrace & develop was the Good Shepherd love (Jn 10)

Jesus measures our love for him by how we love his brethren

The power of Godly love is seen in that Peter's new commitment (made by love) will make him into a new disciple

Within 60 days (Acts 4) he will be mocked, declare his loyalty to Christ & be arrested, without wavering; all by love

His zeal for Christ, despite severe opposition, isn't the result of the Holy Spirit, rather his newfound love for Christ

30. Abigail's Godly Love saves a brother overcome by Sin – 1 Samuel 25

When Nabal spurns David's request for help, David explodes and is on the verge of great sin (v13,21-22)

David is about to act foolishly – he will have slaughtered the very shepherds he & his men had been protecting

Sin can quickly reverse all the good we may have been devoting ourselves to; David now acting like Saul

Abigail's response to the situation is to lay down her life, willingly, so others (David) may benefit (v24)

He is likely a stranger, but this does not prevent Abigail from doing what she can, for his sake

She had nothing personally to gain from her loving offer, all is done to help save David from sin

She shows love to David because he needs it, not because he deserves it

The power of Sin at work in David is immense, but her Godly love became a power greater than sin

David is momentarily overcome by sin; it is the Godly love shown by Abigail that returns him to righteousness

Her quiet, gentle spirit is precisely what David needed, a model for all wives in dealing with headstrong husbands

Husbands should do all they can to encourage this spirit in their wives – David thanked God for Abigail (v32-33)

31. A More Excellent way to build up the Ecclesia – Ephesians 4:11-16

vv11-12 – the spirit gifts, similar to 1 Cor 12, were given for the perfecting of the saints & to edify the ecclesia

v13 – through the unity of faith and knowledge of Christ we grow up into the fullness of Christ

v14 – our maturity from spiritual children to adults prevents us from being led astray by false doctrine or brethren

v15 – our ability to mature into Christ is dependent upon our ability to speak the truth in love

– Godly love must be added to knowledge for spiritual growth to occur

v16 – the growth of the ecclesial body, its ability to learn how to work in harmony, is wholly dependent upon love

32. It is Godly Love that enables an ecclesia to:

1) Work together properly, each part making its own unique contribution and encouraging others to do their part

2) Stand fitly joined together as one, under Christ the head

3) Prevent self-imposed isolation by a single member since each recognizes the need to help all others

4) Avoid ecclesial imposed exclusion since the body recognizes it needs all the parts to be able to grow

5) Rally around a member who suffers, since love understands that when one suffers, all suffer

6) Accept members from many and varied backgrounds, while maintaining unity

7) Function as one, grow as one, to be edified together as one

33. Misguided Love: Eli, Jehoshaphat, the Elect Lady of 2 John and Patriotism

Eli loved & honored his sons above God (1 Sam 2:29); human love puts family before God – a warning to parents! When we stop requiring our children to obey God commands, we stop showing them Godly love
By winking at sin and tolerating their ungodly behavior (3:13), Eli left his family without a covering for sin (3:14)
Human love does not lead a person away from Sin, instead it leads them to destruction
Parents cannot raise children on human love and expect them to embrace Godly love as adults
While Godly love does not turn a blind eye to our children's sin, neither does it rule them with a rod of iron; it asks us to lay down our life for them and do whatever it takes to save them

Jehoshaphat's misguided love caused him to "love them that hate the LORD" (2 Chron 19:2)
A warning: we can have the wrong love on the wrong basis; a danger: confusing human with Godly love
He had good intentions, but they were not consistent with God's Word & would not return Ahab to righteousness
His human love encouraged Ahab to disobey God's Word & ignore Micaiah's warning; it's not what Ahab needed
We only show Godly love if our actions help others to stay within (or return) to the boundaries of righteousness

The elect lady had a wrong understanding of love & it had the potential to destroy their lightstand
In the name of love they welcomed false brethren into fellowship (v10)
Like Jehoshaphat, they showed love, but not Godly love because it didn't return erring brethren to righteousness
John has to remind her of what true love is (v6) & warn her that tolerating error would bring condemnation (v11)
A wrong understanding of love leaves an ecclesia vulnerable to false brethren & they lose their reward (v8)
This is loving your neighbor as yourself - what an erring brother needs is for the ecclesia to speak up & to hold him accountable to change his wrong belief/conduct; the last thing he needs is for the ecclesia to keep silent
Tolerating homosexuality, adultery, drunkenness, theft or any behavior God defines as sin is not Godly love and is not helpful to the sinner because it does not lead him to righteousness or to the Kingdom
Bro J Carter: "the commandments define the channels along which the love should flow" Ltr to Galatians, pg 127

Patriotism is misguided love, confusing human love with Godly love
Its foundation is human love; it stirs deep emotions when soldiers die, but it leads none to righteousness

34. Christ has a special warning to the last generation – the Godly Love of many shall wax cold

There is to be an explosion of evil – all the evil of Noah's day & of Lot's day will converge in a single generation
We can learn much from how Noah & Lot endured the evil of their day: Noah saved his family by condemning the world (Heb 11:7); Lot's righteous soul maintained a daily vexation against the evil (2 Pet 2:8)
The warning of love growing cold is not directed to the world – human love is not deterred by iniquity and willingly accommodates it – but to the household of believers, as Godly love wanes in the presence of evil
This latter day warning is echoed in the sixth vial (Rev 16:15), at the very moment of Christ's return believers are in danger of losing their garments of righteousness, due not to persecution, but to the frog-like spirits of humanistic philosophy which is built upon the foundation of human love

Bro. Ken Styles

Evidence of Godly Love in the lives of Faithful Old Testament Characters

Characteristic of Godly Love	Abigail	Joseph	Judah	Esther
1. The Good Shepherd, laying down our life love; a death occurs; willingly; so others benefit				
2. It's fundamental purpose is to keep a person in the way of righteousness or return him to it				
3. Obedience to God's commandments				
4. Done by faith, springs from faith				
5. Done in hope of a future reward				
6. Done not because a person <i>deserves</i> the love, but because they <i>need</i> the love				
7. Gives to the need, whatever it might be				
8. Requires our total involvement; all our heart/soul/mind/strength (1 st great commandment)				
9. Loves our neighbour as our self (2 nd great commandment)				
10. Done as a servant, not as a master				
11. Restrains wrong conduct, compels right conduct				
12. Provides a balance between right doctrine & matters of conscience				
13. Does good to all, careful not to show partiality				
14. Within the boundaries of righteousness, it has no limits (limitless)				
15. Is separate and distinct from human love				
16. The power of Godly love is greater than the power of Sin				
17. Not inherent at birth, it must be learned				
18. Unites two key principles: crucifying the flesh and serving others				
19. When the Father's love & Son's love & our love unite, an unconquerable power is created				
20. When missing from a relationship, sin wins; it must be reinserted into the relationship				
21. Must be done in deed and in truth, not in word or in tongue				
22. The Father & Son share an expectation that we learn to love one another as they love us				