

TEACH ME!

The request, "Teach me!" implies that the one speaking has a desire and willingness to learn. It also implies that the one making the request has confidence in the one to whom he is speaking. My granddaughter, Kylee asked Sis. Debi Pearce to teach her to crochet. Sis. Debi has a talent or skill in crocheting, and Kylee wants to learn, so the request was made and the teaching has begun.

When Phillip met the eunuch, he asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading, and the eunuch said, "How can I except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31). The eunuch wanted Philip to teach him, and he did!

The disciples came to Jesus and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples" (Luke 11:1). They had heard Jesus praying and knew He had the ability to pray like they had never prayed before. They wanted to learn how to really pray fervently and correctly, and had seen and heard Jesus' perfect prayer.

When Jesus spoke in parables, the disciples would ask him to teach them what they meant (Matthew 13:36; Mark 4:10; 7:17)! And on a few occasions, he taught them the meaning of specific parables.

There are many times in the Bible where individuals go to God in prayer and ask Him to teach them:

1. Psalm 25:4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; **teach me thy paths.**
2. Psalm 27:11 **Teach me thy way,** O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.
3. Psalm 86:11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.
4. Psalm 119:12, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135

Teach me thy statutes...

Teach me the way of thy statutes...

Teach me good judgment and knowledge...

Teach me thy judgments.

But the main request on my heart right now is found in Psalm 143:10: "**Teach me to do thy will**; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." Though the majority of requests for teaching in the Old Testament are for God to teach His people His ways, paths, statutes, and judgments, the request here goes much further. AFTER God has taught us His will and His way, THEN the request is "**Teach me to do thy will!**" (Remember Matthew 7:24-27 and James 1:22-27).

TEACH ME TO DO THY WILL!

What is God's will for me to do? "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This is His will, as well as the previous verses, and the next verses. "Lord, I know Thy will. You have taught me Thy will! Now teach me TO DO Thy will!" Indeed, we know that without Him we cannot do His will! Without Him we can do nothing! "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Philippians 2:13-16).

PLEASE STUDY THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES AS WE SEE THOSE WHO PRAYED FOR OTHERS TO DO

THE WILL OF GOD

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:9-12).

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12).

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).

THINK ABOUT JESUS DOING THE FATHER'S WILL AND REJOICING TO DO IT!

"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7).

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Will you fervently pray for the Lord to teach you **TO DO** His will, and pray for others **TO DO** His will?

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:22-25

Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things

by Elder Steve Pearce
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Occasionally we read of an ordinary individual doing something extraordinary. Someone may be in a difficult situation and use great creativity or act heroically. A person we would never have imagined had the capability to do the things he or she did became a hero.

In the scripture are several instances of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. One of those instances is found in I Samuel 17:20-51. Please read this passage again carefully, though you are familiar with it. David was an ordinary person when we find him on the battlefield. He was a young shepherd, and the only "reason" he was near the battlefield was because his father had instructed him to take some corn and bread to his brothers. As David came to the battlefield, he heard Goliath issue his challenge to Israel, "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we fight together" (I Samuel 17:8-10). On David's journey to doing an extraordinary thing, God put him in the right place at the right time.

When the army of Israel saw and heard Goliath, they ran away because they were afraid. David saw the men run away and said, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God." David was filled with righteous indignation when he heard what Goliath had to say, because this pagan was defying God,

and no one would do anything about it. David was passionate about the situation to the point that he became angry that this situation was allowed to go on, and had been occurring twice a day for forty days. David was passionate about the fact that the armies of the living God were being defied to the point that he became angry.

David's oldest brother, Eliab, came to David in anger and said to David, "Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." David answered him by saying, "Is there not a cause?" David recognized that there was indeed a cause and that the armies of Israel were wrong because no one had the courage to go and stand for the cause. God was being defied, and not one soldier, including David's brothers, was willing to make a stand for God.

David also faced obstacles on his way to the battle with Goliath. First his brother accused him of pride and naughtiness of heart. Because David was willing to point out that others were not fulfilling their responsibilities, his brother made false accusations against him in an attempt to discredit David. He simply ignored his brother and turned away from him. David went to King Saul and volunteered to be the person to go and stand against Goliath. Saul was not willing to let David go because he was a youth and Goliath was a well-seasoned soldier with armor and weapons at his disposal. It was necessary for David to convince Saul that he was capable by telling Saul of the time a lion and a bear attacked his flock and David killed both the lion and the bear with his bare hands. God had prepared David for the

battle by placing him in a difficult situation in the fields with his flock.

For David to have the willingness and the confidence to enter into a battle with a giant man like Goliath, he had to have faith. David's adventure protecting his flock of sheep had helped develop and strengthen the faith of David. David told Saul, "Moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." When Saul heard David's statement, he allowed him to go into battle. David also exhibited his faith when he told Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand: and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." (I Samuel 17:45-46) These are strong words for a young man. He was only able to be so bold because he knew God was with him.

David had a purpose in going into battle against Goliath. Many times we do the things we do because we want recognition for ourselves. It could have been a great temptation for David to want to make a reputation for himself and receive honor. However, David's desire to defeat Goliath was so that God would be glorified.

Finally, David had courage. He had courage because of the faith he had in God, and that enabled him to go into battle against Goliath. His courage is shown when Goliath arose and came toward David, and David hasted, and

ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. Of course you know the rest of the story. David slew Goliath and the Israelites prevailed in the battle against the Philistines.

It seems to me that we may find ourselves in much the same situation as David did those many years ago. Although we may not face an enemy such as Goliath, God is being defied all around us today. The commandments of God and the doctrines of God are ignored and ridiculed. If ever there was a cause, it is now. Why is it that God's people are not willing to stand against the enemy of compromise. We accept things that are ungodly so that others might not be offended, or because we fear the consequences of making a stand. Once we make the first compromise, the rest becomes easier.

If there has ever been a right time and a right place to take a stand, it is now in America and each of our communities. Perhaps it would be good if God's children became angry as did David: angry that God is being disrespected and ridiculed. If we had the kind of love for God that David had, we would be passionate about protecting the name of God. We would be willing to enter the battle and stand against the giants of the world that God might be glorified.

We will also face obstacles on our journey. There may be those who will falsely accuse us or label us with adverse labels. We can only do as David did and ignore the accusations, live our lives so that others will know the accusations are false, and continue to take our stand. Some may tell us we are not capable. We can only respond

that although we may not be capable in our own strength, we can do all things through Jesus.

Making a stand requires courage, and courage only comes when we have faith. David's faith in God gave him the courage to stand for God against all odds. Why would we not have faith? God has been faithful to us throughout our lives. He has provided us with our needs and protected us. We have seen him intervene in our lives and the lives of others in miraculous ways. We have seen God throughout history protect and provide for His children. Let us therefore courageously stand against the enemy who would attempt to defy the Living God. In doing so, we will be ordinary people doing extraordinary things!

Come Apart for a While

by Elder Edward McIntyre
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Mark 6:30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

Luke 9:10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

The above verses refer to the same incident where the Apostles had been

sent out on a mission by Jesus and have returned, gave the report and were tired. Jesus, knowing this, "carries" them into a desert place to rest. A time to rest, regroup, meditate and to restore their tired bodies. It has been said that The Lord's servants never tire of serving, but do get tired and weary of body in serving.

We are living in times of rush, hurry, impatience and stress, and so often we fail to take time to rest in the Lord. We become so involved with worldly things that we get too tired to pursue spiritual things. Things that will cause us to have a closer walk with our Savior, Jesus Christ. Many places in the Bible we are told to be still, stand still,

to wait, to be patient, to think upon, and simply take time to rest and hear the things of the Lord.

If Jesus had a concern for the disciples needing to go aside for rest in that day, I would think He would advise us today to come aside and rest. Why? That we too would be refreshed and ready to go forth in service that would honor Him.

Isaiah 40:31 "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

May God bless us to come apart for a time of refreshing and rest that we may be energized for service in "His Kingdom."

**We are subject to those who rule over us, but subject only in the Lord.
If they command anything against Him, let us not pay the least regard to it.**

John Calvin

The Temple

by Elder Greg Phillips
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“And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice” (II Chronicles 7:12)

It had been in the heart of David to “...to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel” (II Chronicles 6:7). David said, “Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance” (I Chronicles 29:2). David gave of his “...own proper good” a vast fortune of gold and silver “... which I have given to the house of my God” (I Chronicles 29:3). “So David prepared abundantly before his death” (I Chronicles 22:5), assembling much of the material for the building. As well, he, by the Spirit of God, drew the plans for the building and its service (I Chronicles 28:11-13).

It was David’s son Solomon who had the privilege of building the house and seeing its completion. Having finished the temple, Solomon brought in the things which his father had consecrated. He assembled the elders and chiefs of Israel and the Levites in order to bring up the ark of the covenant from the city of David. They brought it and its vessels, and having offered innumerable sacrifices, placed it in the temple, under the wings of the cherubim (II Chronicles 5:4-10).

All this was done with great joy. “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make

one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God” (II Chronicles 5:13-14).

Solomon, seeing the cloud descend and fill the house, immediately understood that the Lord had accepted the place, and was now manifestly present. He seized the opportunity to pray for God’s continued blessings upon this place of worship and upon Israel. He prayed trusting in the promise that God had made to his father David. “Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me” (II Chronicles 6:16).

Solomon prayed, “That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place” (II Chronicles 6:20). In his prayer Solomon recognized that difficulties between men of Israel would arise, “If a man sin against his neighbor” (verse 22) and at times Israel would sin against God, “because they have sinned against thee” (verse 24). Solomon anticipated days of sorrow. He asked of God, “If we call upon Thee, wilt Thou hear us?” “I will,” says God.

Solomon asked that God’s eye and

ear may be open to his house. God exceeds the prayer of the king. Not only shall Mine eyes and Mine ears be there, but My heart shall be there also. God not only declares that He has heard the prayer of Solomon, He says something more encouraging: “I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice” (II Chronicles 7:12).

Solomon knew that God would judge the sins of His people. God affirmed national judgments to be the work of His own hand, as judgment against a straying people, “If I shut up heaven” (Verse 13). God promised that always in national calamity the people who come to Him in repentance will be heard. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chronicles 7:14). God’s house is preeminently a house of prayer and He gives a promise of His perpetual presence in His house. “Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place” (II Chronicles 7:15).

The temple at Jerusalem was for many centuries the chosen place and method of Divine manifestation. It was “chosen and sanctified” of God, the recognized place where God was to be approached, where his presence was manifestly and peculiarly felt, where sacrifice and prayer were to be offered to him, and where pardon and grace were to be gained from him.

It was the place of revelation, where the nature and the character of the Almighty God was to be known, and where He would make Himself

known. "For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (II Chronicles 7:16). There He was to be known as the One True God, as the Holy One, the Just One, the Merciful One; there He revealed himself so that his worshippers could truly honor him, and obediently and acceptably serve Him.

The temple was the place where God manifested himself. "Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." God is in a very true sense, everywhere. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3), but upon His people worshipping Him in His house He looks down with special kindness, and promises to bless all who truly worship Him.

The temple that Solomon built was without doubt "exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries" (I Chronicles 22:5) and built at almost unimaginable cost. It was not, however, the beauty or cost that made the place special. The temple was unique in that it was chosen by God as the place of His manifest presence and the place where He would meet with His people. When Solomon prayed that God would "...hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place" (II Chronicles 6:20), he had in mind not so much the particular physical place, but more so what the place represented. It was God's chosen and approved dwelling place. Without God's presence, the building would have been worthless spiritually.

Jesus Christ spoke of Himself and said, "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6). As He walked upon the earth He was the True Temple that Solomon's magnificent structure could only dimly typify. Jesus Christ is He in Whom and through Whom God manifested Himself to mankind, in Whom

He dwelt and from Whom His glory brilliantly shone.

They who approached Him drew nigh to God and stood in the Divine presence. He made known God, revealing the Father unto men. He was the One toward Whom "the eyes and the heart" of God were peculiarly directed, the "beloved Son in whom he was well pleased," and for whose sake His eye of pity and His heart of love are directed to His children.

In this regard, Jesus Christ is absolutely unique. In no other has God revealed Himself and in no other does He meet with His children. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

When Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, She quickly perceived that He was a Prophet (John 4:19). She asked what she thought the most important of all questions. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). The Jews went up to Jerusalem to the temple. The Samaritans built their temple on "this mountain," Mt. Gerizim. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). Up to this point the public worship of God has been confined to one place. It has been a matter of dispute whether that place should be Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim. The time was at hand when the worship of God, so long confined to a single place, was to be celebrated everywhere, and with as much acceptance in one place as in another. The ceremonial worship of both the Jews and Samaritans would soon become invalid, and a spiritual worship should be established, one more suitable to the spiritual nature of the great and holy God.

Paul addressed the church at Corinth and said, "Know ye not that ye are the

temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16). The community of Christians, the church, is now the place where God dwells manifestly on the earth. His presence is manifested to the assembled church as it was in previously in the temple that Solomon built. If we fail to experience His presence in this unique sense when we assemble to worship, it is because we have failed to prepare ourselves to enter into His presence or have come without proper regard for His holiness.

Part of the reason the Jews lost their temple is because they came to regard it as their house instead of God's house. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:37-39).

Paul gave a very stern warning to the church at Corinth. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). Paul had under consideration those who would divide the church through false teachings and those who would corrupt it by filthiness of the flesh, uncleanness and fornication, or by idolatry. The Corinthians were guilty of all of this. The warning would extend as well to those who fail to recognize the holiness of God's dwelling place. The temple of God is holy. As the temple of God of old was a place built and set apart for holy uses, those that are the people of God are by God called and set apart for the honor and glory of God, and therefore cannot without exceeding peril fail in that responsibility.

What's Love

by Elder Jason S. Solomon
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Do you love me?

There is a wonderful scene in the movie "Fiddler on the Roof" (1). The main character, Tevye, is struggling with the meaning of love. His daughters are getting married and his traditional way of life is unraveling before his eyes. In this poignant moment, he pointedly discusses the matter with his devoted wife, Golde.

Though she is confused, he persists asking his wife, "Do you love me?"

Exasperated, Golde says, "I'm your wife!"

Tevye replies, "I know. But do you love me?"

Considering the matter out loud, Golde responds, "Do I love him? ... For twenty-five years, I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. For twenty-five years, my bed is his. If that's not love, what is?"

Overjoyed and relieved, Tevye calls out, "Then you love me?"

Golde ponders the idea and replies, "I suppose I do."

At last contented and at ease, Tevye says, "And I suppose I love you, too."

Abuse of Love

This scene from a popular movie about Russian Jews during the Bolshevik revolution of the early 20th century illustrates the complex nature of human love. Our culture has too often cheapened love out of misunderstanding and down right ignorance. We say things like, "I love that car... I love that dress... I love that song... I love this job... I love chocolate... or I love baseball." Usually, we mean that we like or appreciate these things. We enjoy them immensely or we prefer them to others. However, by using the word love in this way we inappropriately tie the emotional and relational significance of love to things and not persons.

In most cases, it is likely that we simply misapply the word love when we mean like or appreciate. We would not likely die for a car, a dress, a song, a job, baseball or even chocolate. In these cases, we merely have things out of context. While we know that we do not have an intense relationship with these things that could not be severed (however reluctantly), we have fallen into the cultural device of saying one thing when we mean another. In these cases we are basically lazy.

In a darker sense, sometimes we really do mean to say love whether we know it or not, because we truly love things inappropriately. In this way many have been lead away from the Kingdom of God following after worldly treasures while neglecting the greater reward of God. Children of God are too often tempted away following after the former things because they will not let go of the old man. The Apostle Paul says of these, "...He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). They are not lost fully, but in quenching the Holy Spirit within them, they do fail to love God properly, and therefore they cannot properly experience righteousness, peace, and joy. Pastimes become idols and pleasures become sins.

Grecian Formula

I am convinced that the primary reason that we misuse the term love is that we do not have a proper understanding of the meaning of the word. Our culture has polluted not only what we call love, but the word love piles together in the same concept what even the ancient Greeks understood as different ideas. C. S. Lewis explored this issue at length in a series of radio addresses and a book entitled "The Four Loves" (2). As the basis of his work, Lewis used the four Greek terms for

love: eros, storge, philia, and agape. Each term refers to a different type of love in the sense of feelings, motives, and relational context, as well as elevation toward the truly divine. Of the four, only storge, philia, and agape are found in the New Testament text. Similarly, I want us to explore each of these types of "love." Once understood, we will more fully appreciate true love.

Eros - Romantic Love

Eros is the complex motive concept behind romantic love. Associated with the Greek god of love, eros is tied especially to the romantic love between a man and woman which is often caught up with fleshly desire. Interestingly, it is not found in the New Testament even once. This love's intense heat often impairs the lovers' judgment and causes them to pine for their romantic interest. Eros is perhaps the most instinctual to human nature, and drives our impulse to find a mate. However, like a wildfire, it may burn intensely for a while, but it is not sustainable. By its very nature, romantic love is too intense to be maintained and always cools from its initial intensity.

We would probably all die poor and friendless if romantic love were our only option, because it drives us to express our affection to our loved one so vehemently and so often that we neglect most everything and everyone else in the process. For this reason, I am afraid that many marriages are destroyed by the desire to rekindle eros' flaming arrows. Therefore, it does not appropriately extend beyond the initial pairing process to the same degree. In relationships that last, once it cools, eros is usually combined with or replaced by one of the other loves.

Therefore, because of its relationship to innate human nature and not the spirit, it is not divine. It does not rise to the mark of God's high calling.

Eros has neither the right intentions nor enough endurance to compare to God's gracious love.

Storge - Familial Love

By contrast to eros, storge is the love that characterizes family ties. Whether it is between husband and wife, parents and children, or teachers and students, this form of love is rather instinctual and centers on protection, devotion and care for family members and most often one's own progeny. For example, a mother's maternal instincts are loaded with this natural affection. Like a mother bird protecting her young chicks, human mothers are driven to protect and defend their children even when they do not want protection. Fathers also demonstrate this protective love when seeing their daughters being courted by young suitors. It seems that no young man could be good enough to meet the standard set by fathers.

This same love is also present as children love their parents and mentors. Aware of our innate weakness and desire for guidance and protection, we cling to our guardians and those closest adults as we grow. While we want the intimate romantic affection from a spouse and camaraderie from our peers, we often depend upon our parents and mentors for lasting support and guidance. Thusly, we are (or should be) protective of our parents and defend them and care for them as they age.

The desire to protect the family and care for it is a natural affection. Storge is behind all of this natural desire to provide and care for our children and our desire for parental love as well as our natural affection for our parents. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, as well as other senior family members also have this manner of love, though often in differing degrees.

Lastly, this manner of affection is often found between teachers and their students. The nurturing aspect of this relationship often leads to a stronger commitment due in part because of its familial nature. Teachers naturally care

for the welfare of their students and appreciative students return this affection like a child for its parent by honoring the teacher.

Not surprisingly, the Bible refers to this type of love as "natural affection." As a proper component to happy family life and stable homes and marriages, this affection between family members helps to maintain society and reinforces family roles. Hence the reason it is a definite negative when the phrase "without natural affection" is used by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:31. This three word phrase is translated from the single word term *astorgos* in ancient Greek, and it comes from the root *storge*. In the verses leading up to this, Paul is deliberating on the lost state of some of God's children who are "without natural affection" having been given up by God to uncleanness, etc. The same term is used by Paul in II Timothy 3:3 in another list of depraved characteristics to be found in the hearts of ungodly men in the last days. Otherwise this term does not appear in the New Testament, though the sentiment behind it is clear in many passages.

Storge is therefore clearly not the ultimate standard of love for the godly person. While its intentions are right, it wants more to protect and control than to improve and fulfill. Natural affection like romantic love is also too closely tied to instincts for procreation. By extension, this natural or familial love is less than purely voluntary however wonderful and proper.

Philia - Brotherly Love

Philia is what we call brotherly love. It is the love between close pals and friends, or brothers or other family members that is not tied to instinctual motives. However, perhaps partly because it is not as instinctual as eros and storge, it motivates us to a fraternal duty and sacrificial service for those friends we love in this manner. Both soldiers and sports team members often experience this type of fraternity that is caught up in the concept behind the familiar French phrase, *esprit de corps*. Philia inspires one to achieve

more and reach higher and lies behind the idea of friendly competition.

The sense of duty to the fellowship drives one to support those in the brotherhood and sacrifice self for a fellow brother or a common cause. For example, King David was surrounded by many devoted soldiers. Three of these soldiers, the most daring, would seemingly do for David what he would not do for himself. In II Samuel 23:15-16, we read, "And David longed, and said, 'Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!' And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD." David was their hero! Even though these men were valorous, they saw in David a greater man worthy of profound devotion. And so, they gird their weapons upon their backs and slipped behind enemy lines to bring David a drink of water from his hometown well. However, David demonstrates a greater devotion to godliness and sound judgment by refusing to accept this gift in the face of perils faced by the men who risked their lives frivolously.

Other examples abound in the Old and New Testament concerning this manner of love. In fact the church is called to love one another like brethren. Hebrews 13:1 states this plainly, saying, "Let brotherly love continue." Further, the Apostle Peter states in 1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous..." Both passages point clearly to a loving fellowship of the children of God, not contentious or backbiting, but tender and forgiving as we have been forgiven. Yet, also included in the brotherly love of the church is the edification of the Body of Christ through an *esprit de corps* among its members challenging and supporting the brethren to good works in faith.

Of the three concepts of love thus

far studied, philia is perhaps the most noble, because it is not motivated chiefly by instinct, but rather by mutual devotion between loved ones. It wants to elevate and improve the other party while also buoying the group with goodness or at least daring boldness. Therefore, it is the most like godly love of those discussed thus far. However, it too falls short of the mark of the love of Christ in that it still often focuses on how the self can benefit from the relationship. While in itself this is not bad, it does not describe the ultimate ideal love, Godly love.

Agape - Divine Love

Lastly, agape is the Greek term most often used to describe God's love for His people. Not being intrinsically divine, we can but endeavor to express love as God. However, because this love is truly altruistic and self-sacrificing, we cannot achieve this form of love without divine intervention. This is the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts. This is the love we must strive for as Christians called to service in God's kingdom. Coming from God, it is perfect and applicable in every relationship. Agape love does not seek its own benefit. It does not lose patience. It hopes eternally for the best interest for one loved. This is the love that conquers all, for it is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of the child of God.

Agape is used throughout the New Testament more than any other Greek word for love. In fact one of the most well known portions of Scripture, I Corinthians 13, uses this word to describe the ideal love. In this oft quoted passage, agape (charity) is described eloquently by the Apostle Paul saying, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth..."

The King James version trans-

lates the word agape here as charity, but other versions use the word love. Though we often think of donations, soup kitchens, and bake sales when we hear the word charity, the translators in 1611 used charity here it seems because it captures the self-sacrificing nature of true, Godly love.

When we think of the supreme love of Christ, we are immediately reminded of the beatings, scourging and crucifixion of the Savior. In deed, though, He is the Prince of Peace. He suffered innumerable pains and mental anguish due to the sins He took upon Himself. He said it best in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." True to the attributes ascribed in I Corinthians 13, the love of Christ is self-sacrificing and unfailing. This great love of the Father, His Son, and His Holy Spirit is perfect and without fault.

When we endeavor to be like Christ and conform to His image, we dwell in His love. Conversely if one does not abide in this manner of self-effacing, self-sacrificing love that puts God and others first, then we know that he is not abiding in His love. Repentance notwithstanding, the Apostle John makes this clear when he wrote, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) We must pray for such a one that he be brought to repentance.

Clearly, agape is best represented by Christ's love for the Church. His willing death on Calvary for His people is unique to all of history. Many have loved and died, but none have done so as Christ. He not only died the gruesome death of the Cross, but He, who was without any sin, took upon Himself the sins of His people to atone for their trespasses. From adultery to murder, from covetousness to idolatry, and on and on, Jesus willingly, lovingly paid the price, not only that the Church might survive the wrath of the Father, but further to join His children to Himself for eternity in an everlasting rela-

tionship.

He First Loved Us

The Apostle John's words ring down through the centuries, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). Because of God's limitless mercy, we have faith and hope and the ability to return His love. He could easily have turned to Adam and Eve and said, "You are doomed. You have sinned, and now you must die eternally with no hope of redemption." However, God was not willing to let this happen. For His own reasons, He made Adam and Eve able to stand, but apt to fall. When deception and sin entered via Satan, then God had mercy and set in motion the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Now the Church is made perfect in love. Because we have His love to lean upon, we have hope and faith of a better tomorrow. We enjoy His kingdom and seek righteousness, not out of fear of eternal destruction, but because He loved us first. Throughout the life of each born again Christian, it is God that asks the simple question, "Do you love me?" Unfortunately, our actions speak louder than our words, and we often show that we do not always love God, for we sin. Thankfully, by way of repentance, we return to God's graciously outstretched hand that is there to catch us and chastise us.

The Love of God

The love of God is not built upon lust or infatuation. It is not based upon pre-creational needs and feelings. It is not simply an extension of a fraternal affection that joins us together with God in a community seeking its own. Further, do not mistake "liking" with "loving," and do not love things you should instead merely like. Keep in mind that true love requires sacrifice.

Song writer, Fredrick Lehman, expressed it well when he wrote the song entitled "The Love Of God" (3).

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,

God gave His Son to win;
 His erring child He reconciled,
 And pardoned from his sin.
 When hoary time shall pass away,
 And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
 When men who here refuse to pray,
 On rocks and hills and mountains call,
 God's love so sure, shall still endure,
 All measureless and strong;
 Redeeming grace to Adam's race—
 The saints' and angels' song.
 Could we with ink the ocean fill,
 And were the skies
 of parchment made,
 Were every stalk on earth a quill,

And every man a scribe by trade;
 To write the love of God above
 Would drain the ocean dry;
 Nor could the scroll
 contain the whole,
 Though stretched from sky to sky.

The love of God is timeless and timely. It is implacable and irreplaceable, It is limitless and yet personal. It is self-sacrificing and self-effacing. Always patient, it knows when to chasten. Never covetous, it remains jealous for our affection. In a word, God's love is perfect. In every sense of the word,

it exemplifies enduring affection and altruism. Therefore, as in all things, let us "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14), knowing that we are made perfect in Godly love.

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DO WE REALLY LOVE HIM?

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

The above text declares that the human eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear the things which God hath prepared for them that are loving Him. The things God has prepared for us when we are loving Him are better things than the things we can see or hear. Jesus tells us in Luke 17:20-21 that the kingdom of heaven "cometh not with observation." You cannot see it or hear it! But it is one of the things which God has prepared for them that are loving Him!

Rather than concentrating right now on "the things" that God has prepared for them that love Him, let us first consider whether we ARE LOVING Him or not. Please carefully consider some of the following verses as we examine

ourselves to see if we are in the category of those that love Him (are loving Him).

1. John 14:15- "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
2. John 14:21- "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."
3. John 14:23-24- "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."
4. II Timothy 4:8- "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them

also that love his appearing."

5. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
6. I John 3:1-19- But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."
7. Hebrews 6:10- "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM?

The Tragedy of this late hour is that we have too many dead men in the pulpits, giving out too many dead sermons to too many dead people.

Leonard Ravenhill

Sharing the Gospel

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE? WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS AND OTHER DENOMINATIONS?

The above two questions are asked often. We need to be able to give a simple, concise answer; but if questioned further, should be able to Scripturally explain in detail the main thrust of the truth of God's Holy Word.

For probably about twenty years, when asked the difference in what Primitive Baptists believe, I would start explaining the doctrines of grace: election, predestination, total depravity, the sovereignty of God, etc. I believe God opened my eyes to the difficulty of that approach. First, that is not the order of explanation given in the Bible. Second, I have never really converted anyone using that method. Trying to explain those complex doctrines to a stranger usually leads to one of two reactions: (1) bewilderment and confusion, or (2) an argument. Either way, the child of God is not edified or enlightened.

In looking at the New Testament as a whole, I believe the gospels concentrate on practical, godly living. It is not until we get to the book of Romans that we begin to read a clear record of the fundamental doctrines of our eternal Salvation being by the amazing grace of God. We need to follow the pattern of the Scriptures. Since God explained His truth to us in a particular order, we should follow that same order in explaining the truth to others.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION:

Whereas most denominations are telling others to live right and be good so they can go to heaven when they die, Primitive Baptists concentrate on a heaven we can enjoy while we live! And while others often warn about dying and going to hell, Primitive Baptists are warning God's children about a hell they can experience now, a living

hell here on earth. Primitive Baptists do believe in an eternal heaven and hell when this world is over. But the Scriptures plainly declare that eternal salvation to the eternal heaven is by God's grace, not by our works. Our works, obedience, belief, and faithfulness are required to enter the kingdom of heaven now, but it is the work of God which carries us to the eternal heaven later.

SCRIPTURAL EXPLANATION:

A Heaven on Earth (Now!)

The word "heaven" means "a state of bliss." Certainly, when we die and the Spirit returns to God, we will be in a heaven - a state of bliss. Likewise, in the final resurrection, when the spirit is reunited with the body, and we are conformed to the image of the Son of God, and carried home to be with the Lord forever, that will be Heaven in its perfect fullness. But God in His grace has blessed His obedient children to experience some heaven on earth! This heaven on earth (Kingdom of Heaven) is one of three heavens specifically mentioned in the Bible.

THREE HEAVENS!

Paul said he knew a man who was "caught up in the **third heaven**." (II Corinthians 12:2). In order for there to be a "third" heaven, there must be a "first" and "second" heaven. The Apostle John speaks of the first and second heaven in Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a **new heaven** and a new earth: for the **first heaven** and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." This new heaven is described as coming "down from God out of heaven." (See Revelation 21:2). It is a heaven where God comes down and dwells with us here and makes His presence manifest in a wonderful experience, filling us with great peace and joy. This heaven on earth (Kingdom of heaven) is a sweet foretaste of that eternal heaven where we'll go

when we leave this earth.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN KINGDOM OF GOD

This heaven on earth is often called the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God.

The phrases "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are used interchangeably in the Scriptures. When Matthew records the words of Jesus, he usually uses the expression "kingdom of heaven." But when Luke records the same words of Jesus, he usually says "kingdom of God." This can be easily seen by contrasting Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20. (Also look at Matthew 13:11 with Luke 8:10; and then contrast Matthew 19:14 with Luke 18:16). In fact, Jesus Himself uses both terms when speaking about this heaven on earth in Matthew 19:23, 24, 'Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the **kingdom of heaven**. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the "**kingdom of God**.'" When you read "kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God," the Bible is telling us more about this "heaven on earth" we can experience now by walking in humble obedience to the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ, the king of his wonderful kingdom of heaven on earth.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (THE KINGDOM OF GOD)

Sharing the gospel of the kingdom is sharing the "good news" about the "heaven on earth" which God has prepared for His obedient children while they live here. This gospel of the kingdom is the gospel Jesus repeatedly preached! Look carefully at the subject of Jesus' preaching in the following passages of Scripture.

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preach-

ing the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14).

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23).

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matthew 9:35).

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Though we certainly should preach and share the gospel of Jesus Christ (the good news about Jesus who is our Saviour and also the head of the kingdom), we fail to preach the whole counsel of God's word if we fail to thoroughly preach and share about the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (the kingdom of God). We can only share the gospel of the kingdom if we thoroughly understand the kingdom of heaven (kingdom of God).

ALL PREACHERS WERE PREACHING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (KINGDOM OF GOD)

While many preachers today concentrate on the eternal heaven where we go when we die, the preachers in the Bible all were talking about the Kingdom of heaven we can enjoy while we live here on the earth. The first preacher in the New Testament was John the Baptist. What did he preach? "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2). He was telling the people to repent, to turn from their wicked ways, because the kingdom of heaven was "at hand!" It was about to be established, and they had to repent in order to enter the kingdom of heaven!

The next preacher in the New Testament was Jesus Christ. What did He preach?" Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17). His

message was the same as John the Baptist! In His sermon on the mount, He again began by preaching about the kingdom of heaven. His first words were, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3). Then, He says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10). Study the sermon on the mount, and you will see that Jesus kept telling the people about the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God, which we are able to enjoy each day of our lives on this earth. (Especially notice Matthew 5:19,20; 6:33; 7:21).

When Jesus sent out the apostles to preach, He told them to preach about this heaven on earth, the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God! "And as ye go, preach saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 10:7). Of course, Luke says, "And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:1). John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1,9) were all preaching about the kingdom of heaven, a wonderful heaven on earth for God's obedient children, a place where our soul feels righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14: 17). And later, the Apostle Paul "received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God." (See Acts 28:30, 31). The main text of all preachers in the New Testament was, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And that should be the main text of all preachers today! Preach about the kingdom of heaven, and preach about the King of the kingdom, Jesus Christ!

PARABLES ARE ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!

We have already seen that the first text of Jesus Christ was about the kingdom of heaven, and the sermon on the mount was about the kingdom of heaven, but now consider this: the parables of Jesus Christ were also about the kingdom of heaven, **NOT** the eternal heaven! Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which

sowed good seed in his field..." (Matthew 13:24). He also said, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed..." (Matthew 13:31). "Another parable spake he unto them; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven..." (Matthew 13:33). And Jesus said, "again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field" (Matthew 13:44). Then, we read that Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:..." (Matthew 13:45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net" (Matthew 13:47). Over and over, Jesus kept giving natural illustrations explaining the great mystery of the kingdom of heaven! The disciples even asked Jesus why He was speaking in parables. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speaketh thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you (disciples W. M. M.) to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**, but to them, it is not given." (Matthew 13:10-11). As we truly follow Jesus Christ, we are faithful disciples, we then are blessed "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and realize the parables are not about doing good works to go to heaven when we die, but rather to enter the kingdom of heaven while we live, to have fellowship with God now, to lay hold on eternal life now, to have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost now!

In Matthew 24, Jesus tells the disciples His kingdom of heaven was not going to be a natural kingdom set up in the natural city Jerusalem. He explains that the buildings of the temple and Jerusalem (the first heaven and the first earth) were going to be destroyed (in 70 A. D.), and then the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God (Revelation 21 and 22), the kingdom of heaven would be established. As Jesus spoke to those disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem, He told them, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (Matthew 24:34). Earlier, He assured His disciples that some of them would

see this kingdom of heaven established. He said, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:28). As Jesus finishes describing the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, He says in Matthew 25:1, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." Immediately after the old Jerusalem was destroyed the new Jerusalem was established. **THE KING REIGNS TODAY!** He is judging His people according to their works now! As we are found faithful in service to Him, He grants us entrance into the Holy City, new Jerusalem, kingdom of heaven. These parables in Matthew 25 are talking about faithfulness, obedience, and service which is required for us to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14). Jesus said, "Not everyone 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).

Entering the eternal heaven is not of works (Ephesians 2:9 and Romans 9:11), not by our works (Titus 3:5), and not according to our works (II Timothy 1:9).

Entering the eternal heaven is by the amazing grace of God and marvellous work of God! But in order for God's dear children who have been eternally saved to enjoy the kingdom of heaven while we are living, the parables teach that we must be doing the works He has taught us to do in His Holy Word. All the parables are about doing good works, bringing forth fruit, letting our light shine, and sacrificing the things of the world in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

Just as the parables emphasize the works, obedience, and faithfulness required to enter the kingdom of heaven,

there are other Scriptures which show our responsibility. Please look carefully at each of these verses of Scriptures. "Not everyone 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). What did the five foolish virgins say when they wanted to enter into the marriage (kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God)? They said, "Lord, Lord." Did crying "Lord, Lord" gain them entry? No! They had not kept their lights shining, therefore could not enter into the marriage. Though they had shined in the past, past service was not acceptable. Continuing for a little while will not suffice. It takes perseverance to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says, "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven are the ones who enter. Not hearers only; not talkers; but doers!

When Paul and Barnabas went back to several cities preaching, they reminded them of the perseverance, sacrifices, and sufferings required to enter the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God. They said, "We must **through much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22). If we are not willing to endure persecution and tribulation, we will miss great peace, joy, and comfort of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke 16:16). What is preached since John the Baptist? The kingdom of God! What must every child of God do to enter this heaven on earth? "Every man presseth into it." The word "presseth" signifies vital activity, concentration, and hard work. The body, soul, mind, and heart must all be centered on the one objective: pressing into the kingdom of heaven by overcoming all obstacles and temptations Satan puts in our way.

WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN OR KINGDOM OF GOD?

After hearing all the preaching and

teaching about the kingdom of heaven, the people in the days of Jesus Christ wanted to know where it was. They thought it was a physical, natural kingdom of heaven that they could see with their natural eyes and physically enter into and sit down. Some thought the kingdom would be in Jerusalem; others thought it might be in some other city or country. The people wanted to know **WHEN** and **WHERE** they could go see and enter the kingdom of heaven. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, **The kingdom of God is within you.**" (Luke 17:20, 21). Heaven inside of us! Oh how wonderful it is to know we are going to the eternal heaven when we die. But it is also a great privilege to rejoice in the kingdom of heaven, to enjoy some heaven on earth while we live in this world of sin. We may enter into the kingdom of heaven when we are at God's house, or we may enter the kingdom of heaven riding in our car communing with God, or as we lay on our bed at night praying. We do not have to be in any particular city or location. Wherever and whenever you are having close, intimate communion and fellowship with God you are in the kingdom of heaven, in a state of bliss and joy and peace.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN OR KINGDOM OF GOD?

Though most Jews during the life of Jesus were looking for the kingdom, the new heaven and the new earth promised by the prophets (see Daniel 2:44 and Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:22), their understanding and concept of the kingdom was one similar to the glorious kingdom the Jews had under the reign of King David. Since the Messiah would be the Son of David (his descendent), they were expecting material wealth, physical power, and natural pleasures. A man as poor as Jesus, talking about "Blessed are the poor in Spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heav-

en,” in no way resembled what they thought the Messiah or His kingdom would be. But Jesus made it clear that it would be easier for the poor to enter the kingdom of heaven than the rich! (See Matthew 19:23, 24). He did not come to set up a natural kingdom, but rather a spiritual kingdom which His obedient people could enter regardless of the country in which they lived!

The Apostle Paul gives a clear, exact definition of the kingdom of heaven (kingdom of God) in Romans 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” He explains what the kingdom of God is NOT! Then he tells us what it IS! It is that glorious feeling of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

When you feel the tremendous guilt and weight of sin, and feel that you deserve to be eternally separated from God in an eternal hell, but then come to understand God has redeemed you by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, you can truthfully sing “Amazing Grace,” and realize the blessed righteousness

of Jesus Christ as you enter into that heavenly feeling of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. You are lifted by God from a dark valley to a high mountain, Mount Zion, the kingdom of heaven! When you or your loved one has been told you have cancer or some other major problem, and you feel so low, but then God begins to lift you up and remind you that it is not only in this life we have hope, and you begin by faith to realize that all our lives here are for a brief time, and you KNOW there is something “FAR BETTER” beyond the grave, and you feel reconciled to God’s will, and have a peace which passeth all understanding, then you are in the kingdom of heaven, feeling righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When you hear a great hymn being sung, and the words come alive, and the truth makes your heart rejoice so much you cry, then you are in the kingdom of heaven. When you are reading God’s Holy Word, and the Spirit begins to show you deep truths you have never seen before, then you are in the kingdom of heaven. When

you are praying, and you feel the presence of God so strong you know He is listening, then you are in the kingdom of heaven. When you look at the stars, a sunrise, a sunset, a beautiful flower, and you do not merely see natural beauty, but rather see the glory of God, the creator of it all, then you are in the kingdom of heaven.

WHAT ABOUT THE ETERNAL HEAVEN AFTER WE DIE?

Since most of the New Testament is primarily telling God’s people how to live and what to do, it is understandable that the heaven most often mentioned is the heaven we enter in this world by working and laboring to serve God. However, there is another heaven even better! There is a heaven we shall finally enter forever! And entrance to that eternal heaven is not based on our faithfulness, our works or our obedience. All the family of God, a people so great that no man can number, will be in the eternal heaven when this life is over because of the work of God alone, His amazing grace!

***NEXT MONTH:** How do we enter the eternal heaven?

Grow in Knowledge

1. “And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I _____ be about my Father’s business.”
2. “And he said unto them, I must _____ the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.”
- 3 “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make _____, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.”
4. “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is _____.”
5. “From that _____ forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”
6. “For I say unto you, that this that is _____ must yet be accomplished in me, and he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.”
7. “And he must needs _____ through Samaria.”
8. “And he began to _____ them, that the Son of man must suffer many things.”
9. “For as yet they knew not the _____ that he must rise again from the dead.”
10. “And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and _____ all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.”

Why the Decline?

by Elder McKinley Wright
Jacksonville, Florida

In a recent issue of a Primitive Baptist paper, there were announcements of the disbanding of two churches. One of them was a church that had been founded over a hundred years ago. She had been a strong church, but recently her membership had decreased to the point that when the church building burned, the members did not feel that they could rebuild it. The church disbanded, gave letters to the members who were left, and moved their membership to other nearby churches.

The second church had been founded about thirty years ago. A few Primitive Baptists lived in a certain town. There was a Primitive Baptist church in the town but she would not have anything to do with these members because they were with another faction. When they visited this church, they felt unwanted. So they formed a church where they could worship. This church had been constituted with high hopes of really amounting to something. She was in a town where there was no competition from other churches of her order, so she had every expectation of growth. But such was not the case. There was some growth at first, but it did not last long. Some members moved away. Others died. Still others just lost interest. The membership declined until the few who were left decided that it was unfair to ask a pastor to come and preach to the small number that would gather. They voted to disband. Letters were given to the members so they could transfer their membership to whatever church was their choice.

Two sister churches died in the same month. To wonder why is very pertinent because there are many other churches in almost the same position. This article is not intended to lay

the blame on anyone. The purpose of this piece is to try to stir up the members of other churches which are in almost the same condition, in an effort to avoid having the same thing happen to them. There are several possibilities as to the causes of their deaths. Let us look at some of them.

One possible cause is that they had just lived out their lives. For this to be the case, we would have to assume that God established them for a certain period of time and that this period of time had expired. One might make this argument in the case of the church that was over a hundred years old. Several stronger churches had grown up all around her, and it might be that God just purposed that they would take her place. But another possible explanation is that God raised up these nearby churches to supply something that was lacking in her. It does not seem consistent for God to raise up a church intending that it last only a few years. Her members had a place to go when she disbanded. This was not the case with the one that was only thirty years old. There was no other church nearer than about forty miles--too far for people to conveniently travel for worship. This writer just cannot believe that God would cause a church to fail, leaving his people with no place to worship according to the truth, unless there was something wrong with the church. He would spare the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of ten righteous people who lived there. So, surely, He would leave a church for a few people, if they were really working to keep house for Him.

Another possible cause for the death of these churches might have been that God was just not in the establishment of the churches in the first place. If this were true, they would be

churches in name only. Men are subject to do things like this for vain glory. In the case of the church that was over a hundred years old, this would not seem probable. If the church were established because of the carnal desires of men, it would hardly have taken a hundred years for the movement to have lost its momentum. For the church that was only about thirty years old, this is a distinct possibility. On the other hand, we should give people the benefit of doubt in a case like this and assume that the people who constituted the church were motivated of God in the work, unless it is evident that they were not so motivated.

Another possibility might be that God led the people in forming a church, but that the people did not carry out His instructions correctly as they kept house for Him. Jesus taught about a man who had two sons whom he sent to do a certain work. One of them said, "I go," but he did not do so. Very often, God tells us to do a certain thing, and we agree to do so, but then don't do it, or do it in a half hearted manner, or do it with the idea of gaining some personal benefit through the doing. If I support a church in order to see that church grow, and the name of Primitive Baptists elevated in the community, I am following a wrong motive. The only motive that is acceptable to God is the desire to see the Name of Jesus exalted among men. It is easy for us to become so engrossed in wanting to see our church highly regarded that we begin to work toward that end instead of simply preaching the only gospel that will honor the One who is our all in all. Even the God-honoring doctrines of Grace can be preached in such a way that instead of honoring Him we are boasting about our knowledge of something that someone else does not

know. How often we engage in this! When we do this, the church will suffer in the long run.

Another possible (and more probable) reason for the deaths of these churches is that their members were not living as close to God as they should have been. This was the situation with the Jews in Christ's day. They believed in God. They were looking for the Messiah. They were quick to tell how religious they were. But Jesus pointed out that although their lips were speaking of Him, their hearts were far away from Him. It is easy for us to form habits that become formality, and then do things just for the sake of doing them. Then, when we have gone through the whole program, we think we have engaged in worship although the thoughts of our hearts might have been anything but worship.

The Jews in Christ's day were looking for the Messiah, but they had formed an opinion of how His coming was going to be. Their opinion was not based on the scriptures, but they held to it even more tenaciously than they did to those things that were based

on the scriptures. Do any of our traditions fall into this category? When Jesus came but was not like they expected the Messiah to be, they refused to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. Jesus told them that they would not see Him again until they would say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Jews were shut out of the kingdom of heaven because they would not acknowledge Him as Messiah. Could it be that churches have died because we have ordered our lives according to ideas of men instead of searching the scriptures to see how we should conform our lives? Could it be that our whole denomination is suffering because we are not living as close to God as we should? Could it be that some of us have substituted an abundance of activity for real spirituality? Could it be that others of us boast about our lack of activity, and follow through on this boast to the point that we rob God of the glory that He would receive through our obedience? These questions will benefit us only if we answer them thoughtfully and prayerfully. May the Lord help us to do so.

The death of churches is not a new

thing. None of the seven churches in Asia are in existence today. The dominant Christian religion in that area today does not know anything of the doctrines of Grace. Their religion is mostly just a lot of form with no real substance. It is reasonable to assume that the seven churches in Asia were overcome by the other religions that have developed in the area. **But their deaths are not God's fault.** He told them that unless they changed their ways, He would come quickly and remove their candlesticks. If they changed their ways, the change was only temporary. We say this because those churches are no longer in existence. It is the opinion of this writer that the reasons for the deaths of churches is that the members of those churches have just not lived as close to God as they should. We all should examine ourselves in this regard, because if it happened to the two churches we mentioned at the beginning, and if it could happen to the seven churches of Asia, **it can happen to any of us!**

Let us humble ourselves and seek His way. Then, and only then, will we be able to praise Him as we should.

WILL YOU PLEASE HELP!

There are many ways you can help spread the truth of salvation by Grace and the Sovereignty of God. First, we need more Scriptural articles every month. We need more ministers to write. If every minister would send a written message of some of the sermons God has given him to preach, it would be a blessing to thousands of God's dear children. Second, we need more personal testimonies about the ways God is blessing your life. Every reader, young and old, could tell about a special way God has protected, provided for, or guided your life. Will you please write today? Thirdly, we need more financial contributions if you are able to help in this way. Since we place numerous magazines in Nursing Homes, hospitals, doctor's offices, libraries, and businesses, it takes extra help financially from those who want to help share the truth with others. Fourth, we need more people to help distribute magazines in local communities. If you could place magazines in your community, there is a box on the back of each magazine to put the name and address of the local church, name and phone number of the pastor, and the times of worship services. In addition to the above, we need your prayers. Please pause right now, and ask God to help, guide, and bless this effort to share the truth with others. If we all work together, we can help many of God's children rejoice in His AMAZING GRACE!

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Must - Luke 2:49 | 4. Day - John 9:4 | 7. Go - John 4:4 |
| 2. Preach - Luke 4:43 | 5. Time - Matthew 16:21 | 8. Teach - Mark 8:31 |
| 3. Haste - Luke 19:5 | 6. Written - Luke 22:37 | 9. Scripture - John 20:9 |
| | | 10. Restoreth - Mark 9:12 |

Bible Reading Calendar for September

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Psalms 145-147	I Cor. 11:1-15
2	Psalms 148-150	I Cor. 11:16-34
3	Proverbs 1,2	I Cor. 12
4	Proverbs 3,4	I Cor. 13
5	Proverbs 5,6	I Cor. 14:1-20
6	Proverbs 7,8	I Cor. 14:21-40
7	Proverbs 9,10	I Cor. 15:1-32
8	Proverbs 11,12	I Cor. 15:33-58
9	Proverbs 13,14	I Cor. 16
10	Proverbs 15,16	II Cor. 1
11	Proverbs 17,18	II Cor. 2
12	Proverbs 19,20	II Cor. 3
13	Proverbs 21,22	II Cor. 4
14	Proverbs 23,24	II Cor. 5
15	Proverbs 25,26,27	II Cor. 6

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Proverbs 28,29	II Cor. 7
17	Proverbs 30,31	II Cor. 8
18	Eccles. 1,2,3	II Cor. 9
19	Eccles. 4,5,6	II Cor. 10
20	Eccles. 7,8,9	II Cor. 11:1-15
21	Eccles. 10,11,12	II Cor. 11:16-33
22	Sol. 1,2,3	II Cor. 12
23	Sol. 4,5	II Cor. 13
24	Sol. 6,7,8	Gal. 1
25	Isaiah 1,2,3	Gal. 2
26	Isaiah 4,5,6	Gal. 3
27	Isaiah 7,8,9	Gal. 4
28	Isaiah 10,11,12	Gal. 5
29	Isaiah 13,14,15	Gal. 6
30	Isaiah 16,17,18	Eph. 1

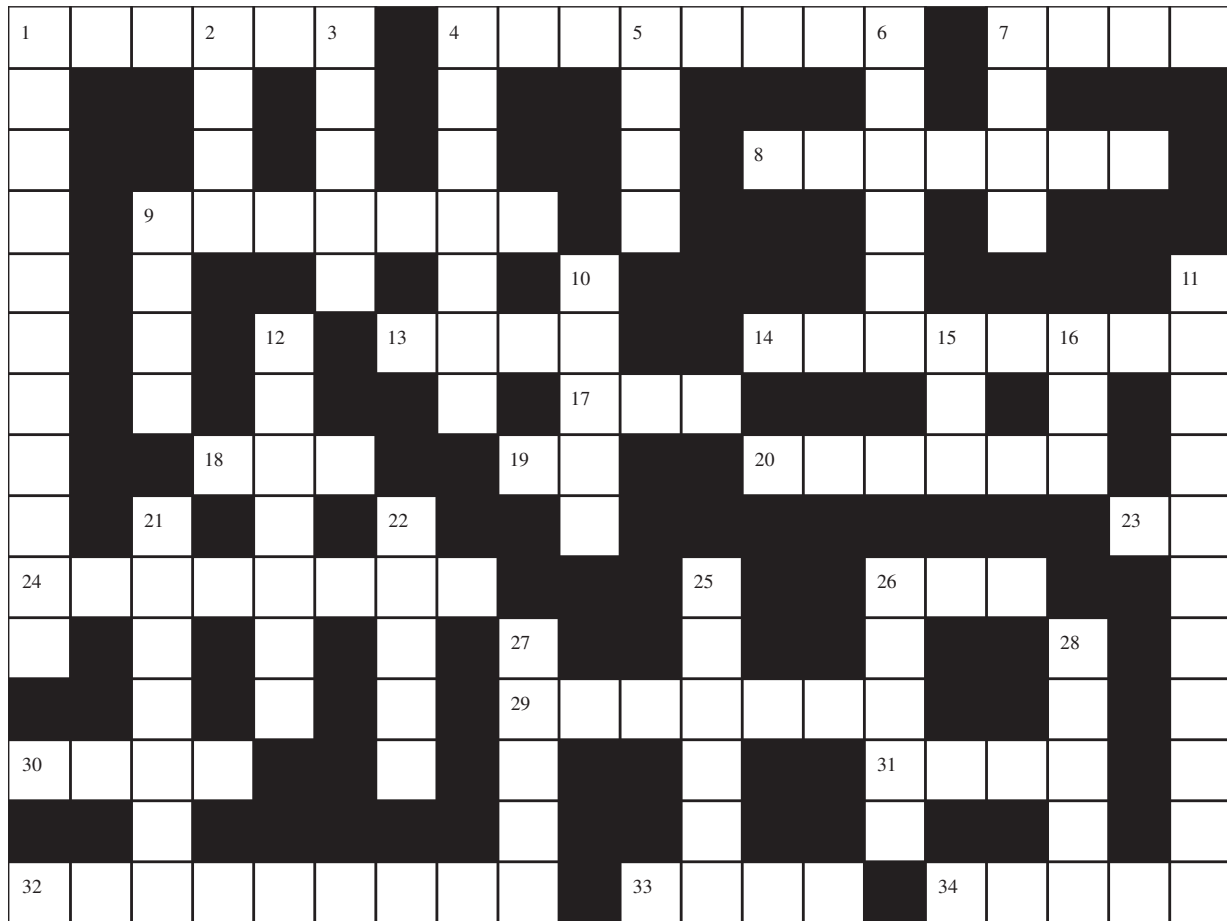
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
AUGUST 09**

1	C	H	A	R	G	2	E		3	T	E	A	4	C	H		5	N	6	E	I	T	7	H	E	8	R			
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10	U	P			11	F	O	R	B	I	D		M		O		C						W				G			
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14	I	F			15	D		R		G							N		P			W					T			
	F			16	J	O	Y			17	I						D			18	T	H	A	T			E			
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22	D	O	O	R					O						23	E	A	T				24	A			25	H	I	S	
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27	R	A	I	N					28	L	A	I	D		29	B						A				30	S	E		
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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither _____ can be." 4. "_____ therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;..." 7. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his _____ for his friends." 8. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I _____ you." 9. "This is my commandment, that ye love one _____, as I have loved you." 13. "...then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do _____." 14. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: _____ ye in my love." 17. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely _____." 18. "... _____ love is of God;..." 19. "Whosoever born of God doth not commit sin;..." 20. "No man can come to me, _____ the Father which hath sent me draw him:..." 23. "Herein is my Father glorified, that _____ should bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." 24. "In whom also we have _____ an inheritance,..." 26. "But _____ unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men..." 29. "...He that loveth not his _____ abideth in death." 30. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is _____ occasion of stumbling in him." 31. "Beloved, let us _____ one another:..." 32. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground _____ whence he was taken." 34. "... _____ one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."



DOWN

1. "All scripture is given by _____ of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness _____ until now." 3. "We know that we have passed from _____ unto life, because we love the brethren ..." 4. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall _____." 5. "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his _____." 6. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might _____ in you, and that your joy might be full." 7. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a _____:..." 9. "Take heed that ye do not your _____ before men, to be seen of them:..." 10. "So then they that are in the _____ cannot please God." 11. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and _____ wicked: who can know it?" 12. "While they _____ them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption:..." 15. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary _____ devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" 16. "He that loveth _____ knoweth not God; for God is love." 21. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. and ye know that no murderer hath _____ life abiding in him." 22. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world _____;" 25. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this _____, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" 26. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the _____, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" 27. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall _____ in my love;..." 28. "_____ things I command you, that ye love one another."

Living In The Present Moment

by Sis. Susanna Chenoweth
Danville, Indiana

The telephone rang. When I answered it, I heard my three-year old nephew, Ian, on the other end. We talked for a bit, then there was a pause. To make conversation, I asked him, "So, Ian, what are you doing?" With a slightly exasperated tone, he replied, "Aunt Susie, I'm talking to you!"

His response made me chuckle at the time, for it reminded me of how

literally our youngest children experience the world. They live fully in the present. To them, the past is past, and the future hasn't happened. There's only now. Later in prayer, I asked God, "If only I could be more like a child, more aware of each moment of each day, wouldn't I be more aware of You as well?"

If we can strive to look at the world

as a child does, to live in the present, to experience and appreciate each moment---oh, what blessings we would find!

Prayer: Dear God of time and eternity, You know our present, past and future. But it's today, the present, where we will find You. Help us to meet You here, to listen for Your guidance, and to be thankful for each moment You give us; in Jesus' name. Amen.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:33,34).

**Christianity, as Jesus taught it (if practiced in our daily lives),
can cure every social ill of humanity.**