

THE POWER OF *Love*:



IT'S THE KEY TO *your* LIFE

Excerpted from *The Power Series*
An *Mpower Ministry* Study
(Volume 1: Number 1)
By Travis E. Mitchell

CONTENTS

THE POWER OF *LOVE*

INTRODUCTION	3
Love's <i>Story</i>	
<p>Because of God's profound impact on our lives, we (my wife and I) have made a decision to share His unconditional love with all those that we come into contact with. This is our testimony...</p>	
CHAPTER 1	14
Love's <i>Key</i>	
<p>Life is like a car and God's love is the key to the ignition. If we'll trust Him completely, we'll arrive at His desired destination for our lives.</p>	
CHAPTER 2	32
Love's <i>Law</i>	
<p>Jesus tells us that all of the laws of the Bible are summed up in two: loving God and loving our neighbors.</p>	
CHAPTER 3	41
Love's <i>walk</i>	
<p>God's love is not human love. In order to walk in love, we have to do it in His power.</p>	
CHAPTER 4	58
Love's <i>Power</i>	
<p>God is love. And with His love working in and through us, we will live <i>life in abundance to the full, till it overflows</i> in joy.</p>	
CHAPTER 5	78
Love's <i>Application</i>	
<p>To aid your growth and development; an outline, a list of daily confessions and mediations has been provided for future reference and study.</p>	

INTRODUCTION

Love's *Story*

In the early sixties Berry Gordy created a brand of music -- known as the Motown sound -- which exported messages of love to the world and in the process spawned a media empire that dominated popular culture for decades. All cultures were able to relate to this love music and its themes. Yet, despite producing some of the most popular hits of all time and raking in hundreds of millions of dollars, Gordy found it difficult to maintain his competitive advantage and ultimately sold his creation.

Ironically, Motown's financial status was similar to the realities of the love described in its music -- it was unstable and unpredictable. It was up one year and down the next. Emotional love is based on circumstances. It is fleeting. It is about how you feel at the moment. It is all about you. It is selfish. It is human. It is conditional.

However, no plan, organization or methodology on Earth -- not even the most brilliantly conceived plan, by the best minds in the world -- can endure if it is built on emotional love. Solid foundations are built on the power of God's unconditional love.

But what is this power?

The *American Heritage* dictionary defines power as *strength, ability* and *might*. It calls it: "the ability or capacity to act or perform effectively; A specific capacity, faculty or aptitude; or, the ability to exercise control." Love is a force. **Matthew 6:33** (*The Amplified Bible*) shows us that this love only comes from a right relationship with God, seeking to advance "His Kingdom first and His righteous and all things, *power* and ability will be given."

And in **Matthew 22:37-40** Jesus tells us that there are two great commandments: "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and to love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Bible gives us more understanding of this unconditional love in **Galatians 5:22** that the "fruit of the spirit is love" and that love is "joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (or challenge)."

The Bible (*The Amplified Bible*) also tells us in **1 Corinthians 13:2-3** that without love we gain nothing.

...²If I have (sufficient) faith so that I can remove mountains, but have not love (God's love in me) I am nothing (a useless nobody). ³Even if I dole out all that I have (to the poor in providing food... But have not love (God's love in me), I gain nothing.

Here then is the Bible's (*The Amplified Bible*) full definition of love (according to the Apostle Paul) in **1 Corinthians 13:4-6**:

⁴Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. ⁵It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it (it pays no attention to a suffered wrong). ⁶It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

The Apostle Paul says: "I am nothing without God." I feel the same way. I have not achieved any success in my life without God. **1 Corinthians 8:1-3** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹Mere knowledge causes people to be puffed up (to bear themselves loftily and be proud), but love (affection and goodwill and benevolence) edifies and builds up and encourages one to grow (to his full stature).

²If anyone imagines that he has come to know and understand much [of the divine things, without love], he does not yet perceive and recognize and understand as strongly and clearly, nor has he become as intimately acquainted with anything as he ought or as is necessary.

³But if one loves God truly (with affectionate reverence, prompt obedience, and grateful recognition of His blessing), he is known by God (recognized as worthy of His intimacy and love and he is owned by Him).

Our testimony...

Those words described me, my attitude and outlook on life perfectly. I was puffed up with mere knowledge and had to learn the hard way. Instead of living my life according to **Matthew 6:33**, I was living according to what **James 1:22** (*The Amplified Bible*) warns us not to do: "I was hearing the Word and not doing the Word and betraying myself into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth." Reasoning (my intellect and my emotions) was my guide. Whatever I thought or felt like doing, I would do.

Much of this changed almost ten years ago in 1997 when my bubble burst and what was shaping up to become a life of glamour, success and promise had suddenly become a life of failure when measured by the world's standards. At 27, I was broke, busted and disgusted.

In early 1997, things seemed like they were about to explode for my business. I mean I was about to “blow up” in a good way. Because of a couple business deals that looked like they would materialize, I could smell my first \$1 million year. I was proud about it, too. After all, my wife (Angie) and I had bought her grandmother and grandfather’s house in the neighborhood we grew up in. It was a corner lot. We renovated the house and I showed it off to anyone who would come by. Yes indeed, we were on our way. The local boy had come home a success.

Well, I was in for the shock of my life. What seemed like success was no success at all. The business deals fell apart. And because I had hired a staff in anticipation of those deals closing, without the money that the deals would have generated, I did not have enough revenue in my business to meet payroll. Angie and I ended up borrowing heavily against our personal funds and relying on credit cards. We assembled our staff and paid them one month’s salary in advance and let them know that they could either work with us for the next month and help us turn the company around or they could use our phones, fax and e-mail to find another job. Once it rained, it literally began to pour. By making up payroll with all of our personal money and credit cards, we got behind on our mortgage payments and car payments. It all seemed to come crashing down around us at one time.

During this time, I borrowed money from my mother and father and even the little \$20 that my grandmother would give me helped me to have enough gas money to make it through the week. Though times were tough, I thank God that I have a loving family. But even with their love, it was not enough to keep the Sheriff from putting pink notices on my front door, back door and every door because the bank had started foreclosure procedures on our home. It was no longer cool to be on the corner lot now that everyone in the neighborhood could see those slips on my door, too. And, the “snatch man” was coming after my new car. I was hiding it everywhere I could and to make matters worse, the transmission was failing.

As the man of my household who made the primary business decisions that led to mounting debt -- I felt like a complete and utter failure -- I felt less than a man.

When no other business opportunities or jobs seemed to be on the horizon, I remember falling on my face in my mother's living room and crying uncontrollably. Angie and my mother were consoling me, but I hurt so bad I couldn't tell you what they were saying. I didn't really know how to pray, so I just asked God to help me. I surrendered my life -- all of my life -- to Him and asked Him to deliver us.

After much prayer and reflection, God began to move. First, after I cleaned up my car and told the "repo-man" where he could find it, the finance company called me back and noticed that I had never missed a payment, so they developed a payment plan for me. My mother was blessed with financial increase and was able to help me save my house. Then, I was offered a contract to produce a daily television show for a new cable channel based in Washington, D.C. Before leaving North Carolina for D.C., we found someone to rent our home in Raleigh for more than the mortgage payment and my mother was able to keep the monthly profit as a repayment on the money she gave me to help save my house.

Praise God! Things were turning around.

After moving to Washington, DC, I was able to produce over 350 daily television shows and learn how to run a cable channel. Things in my life had turned around. We were faithful and tithing members of our church and we were happy. Angie and I decided to go deeper in our relationship with God, so on the night of December 31, 1998 we rededicated our lives to Jesus Christ at a New Year's Eve service. We decided to finally learn what was between the

covers of the Bible for ourselves, so we threw ourselves into studying the Word of God and attending every Bible study we could find.

Within a two week period; tragedy tried to strike.

After completing a study one night, Angie woke up to the worse pain of her life. She was in so much pain, she shook all night. As her husband, I felt powerless to help her. The next day she was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

However, through our study we had discovered the "The Lord God who heals" and we knew that according to His Word in *Isaiah 53:5* that by "Jesus stripes we are healed!" We held on to that Word and accepted the challenge. Doctors gave us a 60 percent chance that she would have a full recovery, but we knew that we had better than a 100 percent chance of recovery in Christ. Doctors also said that we may never be able to have a child because of the impact that the tumor had on her pituitary gland.

A few weeks later and amid all this turmoil, I became aware of a new television network started by a friend. I decided to help him get exposure by booking an appearance on the show that I produced. I pledged my support and for the next six months attended meetings and submitted plans and information to the owners of the network that I thought would help it succeed. I gave without expectation of reward.

To make a long story short: Angie recovered fully from her tumor; I was offered a top executive position with the new start-up cable channel; and -- within a two year period -- we had a beautiful baby girl!

People ask me why I talk about God all the time and I tell them that it was only through a true relationship with God that I learned that “I could do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Without God I would have been a true menace to society – a frustrated man full of disappointment, dashed dreams and deferred hope. Instead, my only desire became to do and be what God wants me to do and be: as a husband; as a father; as a son; as a friend; and as an executive. Little did I know that a few years later, God would once again stretch me to grow in love beyond anything I could comprehend.

True Love...

During a period of fasting and prayer, in 2006, I received a revelation from God’s Word about true love in action. *Isaiah 58:6-12* says (*The Amplified Bible*):

⁶[Rather] is not this the *fast* that I have chosen: ... ⁷Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house -- when you see the naked, that you cover him, and that you hide not yourself from [the needs of] your own flesh and blood?

⁸Then shall your light break forth like the morning, and your healing (your restoration and the power of a new life) shall spring forth speedily; your righteousness (your rightness, your justice, and your right relationship with God) shall go before you [conducting you to peace and prosperity], and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; ... If you take away from your midst yokes of oppression [wherever you find them], the finger pointed in scorn [toward the oppressed or the godly], and every form of false, harsh, unjust, and wicked speaking,

¹⁰And if you pour out that with which you sustain your own life for the hungry and satisfy the need of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in darkness, and your obscurity and gloom become like the noonday.

¹¹And the Lord shall guide you continually and satisfy you in drought and in dry places and make strong your bones. And you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.

¹²And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of [buildings that have laid waste for] many generations; and you shall be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

Shortly after receiving this revelation, I received an opportunity to act on it. A friend introduced me to a non-profit organization dedicated to the poor. Founded in 1982, *Food for the Poor* is an interdenominational Christian relief and development organization working primarily in 16 countries in the Caribbean, Latin America and the United States to assist the poorest of the poor.

Food for the Poor brought me to Jamaica to see the need for their work. To say that I was not prepared for what I saw is an understatement. The images of white sandy beaches and exotic getaways that come to mind when thinking of Jamaica, are not the reality of many of the nation's poor. In many poor communities the unemployment rate hovers around 70% and the per capita income is only \$4,400.

I saw people living in dangerous shanties without windows, doors, roofs or water.

I saw elderly people living among raw human sewage in rickety homes on faulty foundations.

I saw women and children exposed to the elements.



But I also met people with great faith. I spoke to families who gave thanks to God for what they do have.

- ❖ June is the mother of two daughters, one son and the grandmother of two. She lives in a dilapidated shack with no doors, or windows. She suffers from several illnesses but has learned to re-cover furniture to make a living. In addition, she grows peppers, and raises chickens and sells their eggs in the market. All she wants is a sewing machine so that she can cover more furniture.
- ❖ Sandra suffers from a severe case of osteoporosis and lives in a group home. Even though she has only one healthy arm and is confined to a wheelchair, she was a gold medalist in the *Special Olympics*; has become a computer specialist and has a job waiting for her upon completion of a degree program.

I have also seen what just one person can do to make a difference.

- ❖ Barbara is the mother of eight who lives in Jacksonville, FL. She responded to the need in Jamaica by building 34 homes now called “Barbara’s Village.” Even though she doesn’t have a home of her own and lives in an apartment, she invested her savings and raised \$75,000 in the Jacksonville area for her efforts on behalf of Jamaica’s poor.



- ❖ A 17-year-old in Ft. Wayne, Indiana helped organize funds to build a library in Jamaica. She organized the donation of over 20,000 books.

- ❖ Pastor Kelly is a pastor from Washington, DC

who moved to Jamaica after seeing the need of the poor. He is now working with community leaders to revitalize some of the most economically depressed areas of Kingston.

Despite all of these efforts, there are still over 15,000 families on a waiting list for new homes in Jamaica. Based on what I witnessed first hand, it was hard for me to imagine anyone remaining in those conditions even just one day longer. Then, I was moved by the Holy Spirit. I began to think about my own family and my own friends; not the condition of their housing arrangements, but the conditions of their hearts.

But what could I do?

Over time, the answer from God has become increasingly clear:
*Minister the love of God to my network of family members and friends and
God will move them to minister to the needs of others just like He moved me.*
I believe that God has used these experiences to prepare (Angie and I) to make
a difference in the lives of others. And I believe He wants you to do the same.

This is true love in action.

CHAPTER 1

Love's *Key*

Life is like a car...

Life is like a car and God's love is the key to the ignition. Without the key you can't turn on the car. The problem for most of us is that; not only do we not possess the right key, but we don't know how to operate our cars (lives) either; because we haven't read the manual. The manual for our lives is the Bible (the Word of God). This manual contains the instructions that; not only help us operate our lives more effectively, but also provide a road map to help us reach our destination. However, the problems of life tend to distract us along the way. As we get focused on our problems (presented by our future or our past), we lose focus on God and His love, trusting more in our own sense of direction and our own ability. I have been guilty of this many times.

The Bible is Your Manual...

Angie and I like to take our daughter on long road trips. Of course, as my better half, she is always directing me from the passenger seat -- and with good reason. I have a tendency to become so pre-occupied on where I am going by focusing on some distant point or object down the road, that I don't notice exit signs or sometimes even stop signs or traffic lights in front of me. And likewise, I tend to look in the rearview mirror to gauge what's going on behind me. During this process of looking far ahead (to the future) in front of me or way behind me (in the past), I always neglect what's around me in the present.

God's love is our ever-present help. He is found in the now! Like a good parent, He desires to give us the best today! In fact, He has a better car (life) for us to drive, if we would just pay attention to the road signs and show that we are mature enough to handle it. God won't allow us to drive the new car (a

new life), until we are ready. Likewise, though my six-year-old daughter will one day inherit everything I own, including my cars, I will not allow her to drive my cars right now because she doesn't know how. She is not ready. **Galatians 4:1-9** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹NOW WHAT I mean is that as long as the inheritor (heir) is a child and under age, he does not differ from a slave, although he is the master of all the estate;

²But he is under guardians and administrators or trustees until the date fixed by his father.

³So we [Jewish Christians] also, when we were minors, were kept like slaves under [the rules of the Hebrew ritual and subject to] the elementary teachings of a system of external observations and regulations.

⁴But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law,

⁵To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God's sons].

⁶And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father!

⁷Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ.

⁸But at that previous time, when you had not come to be acquainted with and understand and know the true God, you [Gentiles] were in

bondage to gods who by their very nature could not be gods at all [gods that really did not exist].

⁹Now, however, that you have come to be acquainted with and understand and know [the true] God, or rather to be understood and known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly and worthless elementary things [of all religions before Christ came], whose slaves you once more want to become?

Let's focus on verses 1-2 for a moment:

¹NOW WHAT I mean is that as long as the inheritor (**heir**) is a **child** and under age, he does not differ from a slave, although he is the master of all the estate;

²But he is **under** guardians and administrators or trustees until the date fixed by his father.

Once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior we become the righteousness of God. While righteousness can not be earned, there are certain rights and privileges that go along with it. However, many Christians live their whole lives and never fully obtain or enjoy the full benefits of these rights because though heirs, they behave as (spiritually immature and underdeveloped) children and remain under the supervision of guardians. Let me offer an illustration.

There are three interns at a corporation. One intern is just happy to have the internship listed on his resume. Another intern is working hard to impress his bosses so that he can get a job at the end of his internship experience. And, the final intern works harder than the others, because he doesn't just want credit or a job, he has to know how the business works because his father owns it and he may run the company one day.

However, though he could inherit a fortune from his father's estate one day when his father dies, he is not guaranteed to receive it or the CEO post if he does not prove himself worthy. The trustees of his father's estate will not give him the estate or appoint him as the CEO if he is incapable of handling it and has not "shown himself approved."

Love is the key to the ignition...

We are heirs because we are born again (like the intern above who became an heir instantly the day he was born), but we don't receive our inheritance until the appointed time. So when is the appointed time? When do we show ourselves approved? The Bible clearly tells us in Galatians 5:5-6 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

⁵For we, [not relying on the Law but] through the [Holy] Spirit's [help], by faith anticipate and wait for the blessing and good for which our righteousness and right standing with God [our conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action, causes us] to hope.

⁶For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, *but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.*

The right key and the right manual provide the right direction...

We receive our inheritance when we learn to conform to God's "Will, in purpose, thought and action" and through faith "activated and energized and expressed and working through love." In order to operate in our new life we must use the key of love and follow closely the manual of instructions -- God's Word -- to arrive at His pre-determined destination for our lives.

Proverbs 3:5 (*The Amplified Bible*) says: ⁵Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

Psalms 119:5 (*The Amplified Bible*) says: ⁵Oh, that my ways were directed and established to observe Your statutes [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying them]!

What does John 3:16 mean?

Now that we understand that *love is the key* to obtaining our inheritance in Christ Jesus, let's examine **John 3:16** (*King James Version*) a little more closely. What does it really mean?

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Here's what two friends said about John 3:16:

"If you think about what your child means to you, there is no greater gift than to be blessed with a precious life... If you think about all the possessions that you have, there is nothing greater than this life that has come from your own body."

"God made the ultimate sacrifice because He gave us all that He had. God was willing to give us the greatest thing that He had in exchange for our lives. If you are willing to give up something that great in exchange for another life, then apparently that life has great value to you. God cared that much for us that He gave us access to eternal life and the key to it."

There is no better way to describe God's love for *us*. He made the ultimate sacrifice for *us*: not the "saved" *us*; not the "perfect" *us*; but for

“ALL” of *us*, even when we didn’t love Him. All we have to do is love God: by accepting His Son; accepting His love and making Jesus the Lord over our lives. We have been given a special gift, an opportunity to make Jesus the Lord over: our lives; our families; our businesses; our emotions; our pain, and even over our poor image of ourselves!

One of the very first manifestations of the love of God is the healthy love of self. We must learn to see ourselves the way God sees us. When God looks at us as born again Christians, He sees the blood of Jesus. He sees His Son. He sees love in us. We must learn to love ourselves with the same love that God loves us with, and then the love of Christ can freely flow from us toward others. There are many Christians who have not forgiven themselves for past mistakes. To make matters worse, they are more conscious of sin than they are of their righteousness or of God’s love. Satan uses their guilt against them to torment them and make them slaves to their sin.

This is what makes God’s love for us so powerful. It is truly an “amazing grace.” To accept Jesus, is to be forgiven and to be freed from, bondage, average, hurt, pain and debt. Even the most heinous criminal in the history of the world, if he repented of sin and accepted Jesus as the Lord of his life, would be saved and washed by the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is the most powerful cleanser in the history of creation!

You’ve heard what my friends and I have said about God’s ultimate sacrifice. Let’s hear what Jesus himself has to say about his mission. **Luke 4:16-21** (*The Amplified Bible*) tells us:

¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, [that Nazareth] where He had been brought up, and He entered the synagogue, as was His custom on the Sabbath day. And He stood up to read.

¹⁷And there was handed to Him [the roll of] the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened (unrolled) the book and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity],

¹⁹To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound.]

²⁰Then He rolled up the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were gazing [attentively] at Him.

²¹And He began to speak to them: Today this Scripture has been fulfilled while you are present and hearing.

Please make special note of what Jesus said in verse 18. He said that He was “anointed to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor and to announce the release to the captives.” During the time of Jesus, heavy taxes were imposed on the people during a time of economic hardship.

He goes on to say He has been sent to “send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed and broken down by calamity].” When we solely focus on the miracles manifested in the healing ministry of Jesus, we minimize the true power and purpose of His sacrifice. Jesus came to offer a new way of life, a new system greater than man’s system, greater than Satan’s system, it was God’s system. In God’s Kingdom (God’s Will, God’s Word and God’s Way of doing things) physical healing was available; but also too, was financial restoration, mental clarity, peace in

relationships and emotional recovery. Everything needed was now readily available through Jesus.

Jesus came to restore man to his rightful position as a co-owner and operator of the Earth and everything in it. He was a threat to the ungodly and to Satan because he upset the order of things. In **John 10:10** (*The Amplified Bible*) Jesus says:

¹⁰The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

Jesus helps us see clearly the mark of Satan and his tactics. After Jesus announced His arrival in the synagogue by saying that "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled while you are present and hearing," Satan filled the crowd with rage; turning them against Jesus and inciting them to push Him off a cliff to a certain death! Whenever you receive a Word from God in your heart and you are motivated to express love toward others, Satan will try to rob you of your peace! He is after your peace, your joy, your desire, your motivation, and your dreams. In fact, Satan is after anything that you desire to do for God. But he can not defeat you, because he has already been defeated by Jesus. There is nothing that Satan can do to stop you because once we're born again "we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!"

Jesus did not come just for us to have eternal life. Our salvation is only part of the benefit of our righteousness. Jesus came so that we might -- accomplish our pre-destined assignment given to us even before the world was created and in the process of executing our tasks for God -- enjoy life (on Earth) in abundance (to the full till it overflows). Satan has been trying to deceive Christians to believe that we can't live the God-type of life on the Earth, but that this type of life is only available in Heaven. However, when Jesus died and rose again for our sake, Satan's time was up. Now, "greater is

He (Jesus) who is in us than he (Satan) who is in the world." Again, we must learn who we are in Christ in order to experience the life God has for us.

In 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 (*The Amplified Bible*) the Apostle Paul tells us:

⁸I give this not as an order [to dictate to you], but to prove, by [pointing out] the zeal of others, the sincerity of your [own] love also.

⁹For you are becoming progressively acquainted with and recognizing more strongly and clearly the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (His kindness, His gracious generosity, His undeserved favor and spiritual blessing), [in] that though He was [so very] rich, yet for your sakes He became [so very] poor, in order that by His poverty you might become enriched (abundantly supplied).

By combining Luke 4:16-21, John 10:10 and 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 we can see that everything we need can be found in Jesus. Our healing is in Jesus. Our provision is in Jesus. Our peace is in Jesus. Our joy is in Jesus. Our restoration is in Jesus. And Jesus is in everyone who has accepted His love. Therefore because Jesus and His love are in us, everything that we need is not found on the outside of us, but on the inside of us.

The trick of Satan is to suggest to us that everything will be well with us when:

We get a new job;

We get the job we want;

We get our house;

We get our spouse;

Our husband acts right;

Our wife acts right;

We make more money;

We feel a little better;

It's not raining; or,

People say nice things!

Satan wants our joy to be based on circumstances. He wants to prophesy doom and gloom to us and get us focused on negative circumstances instead of on God and His Word. During times like these, we have to counteract Satan's suggestions (just like Jesus did when tempted in the wilderness) by speaking the Word of God. As an expression of our love and trust for God, we simply must confess with our mouths the promises of God found in His Word. For example, if we believe we are healthy and the doctor tell us some bad news, we have to say out loud: "according to *Isaiah 53:5*, your Word God tells me that by Jesus stripes I am healed, so today I am healed in the name of Jesus!"

Because as believers we "walk by faith and not by sight," it is important to stand on the Word and believe God no matter what the circumstances around us look like. Jesus, our resurrected Christ, has taken up residence on the inside of us. This means that the same power that enabled him to overcome death and resurrect His life is available to us.

This power can resurrect our marriages.

This power can resurrect our joy;

This power can resurrect our peace;

This power can resurrect our hope;

This power can resurrect our finances;

This power can resurrect our careers;

This power can resurrect our futures;

This power can resurrect our lives!

Jesus has been given all the power to rule and this power is available to us 24 hours a day enabling us to do what he has called us to do. **Matthew 28:18-20** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹⁸Jesus approached and, breaking the silence, said to them, all authority (all power of rule) in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me.

¹⁹Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be).

Again, in verse 20, Jesus says that He is with us “all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion).” When we have fallen, when we are sinning, when we are down, Jesus is with us. Instead of running from Him, we must learn to run to Him. **Romans 10:9** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

⁹Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

This scripture does not just discuss our salvation. Once we become saved by confessing Jesus as Lord with our mouths and believing it in our hearts, we

have a right to protection from the enemy continually for the rest of our lives. The more we understand His love and how it works, the more victorious we will be over sin (the things we struggle against) and over Satan.

So What is love?

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness,

²³Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

When we operate in God's love, the evidence is the fruit of the spirit. And it is the fruit of the spirit that is to be shared with others. God's love for us and through us should be on display so that God gets the glory. **1 John 4:7-15** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is (springs) from God; and he who loves [his fellowmen] is begotten (born) of God and is coming [progressively] to know and understand God [to perceive and recognize and get a better and clearer knowledge of Him].

⁸He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love.

⁹In this the love of God was made manifest (displayed) where we are concerned: in that God sent His Son, the only begotten or unique [Son], into the world so that we might live through Him.

¹⁰In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins.

¹¹Beloved, if God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another.

¹²No man has at any time [yet] seen God. But if we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love (that love which is essentially His) is brought to completion (to its full maturity, runs its full course, is perfected) in us!

¹³By this we come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we abide (live and remain) in Him and He in us: because He has given (imparted) to us of His [Holy] Spirit.

¹⁴And [besides] we ourselves have seen (have deliberately and steadfastly contemplated) and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son [as the] Savior of the world.

¹⁵Anyone who confesses (acknowledges, owns) that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides (lives, makes His home) in him and he [abides, lives, makes his home] in God.

The only way to love the “hard to love,” or to forgive “the unforgivable” is through the love of God. God wants us to remain in right relationship with Him and with our neighbors. The harmony of relationships in our lives is important. **Romans 13:8-9** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

⁹The commandments, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet (have an evil desire), and any other commandment, are summed up in the single command, You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.

Again, let's take a look at the specific details of God's love in action in us. I Corinthians 13 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹If I [can] speak in the tongues of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (that reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion such as is inspired by God's love for and in us), I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

²And if I have prophetic powers (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), and understand all the secret truths and mysteries and possess all knowledge, and if I have [sufficient] faith so that I can remove mountains, but have not love (God's love in me) I am nothing (a useless nobody).

³Even if I dole out all that I have [to the poor in providing] food, and if I surrender my body to be burned or in order that I may glory, but have not love (God's love in me), I gain nothing.

⁴Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

⁵It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].

⁶It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

⁷Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].

⁸Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]. As for prophecy (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), it will be fulfilled and pass away; as for tongues, they will be destroyed and cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away [it will lose its value and be superseded by truth].

⁹For our knowledge is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect), and our prophecy (our teaching) is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect).

¹⁰But when the complete and perfect (total) comes, the incomplete and imperfect will vanish away (become antiquated, void, and superseded).

¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; now that I have become a man, I am done with childish ways and have put them aside.

¹²For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality and face to face! Now I know in part (imperfectly), but then I shall know and understand fully and clearly, even in the same manner as I have been fully and clearly known and understood [by God].

¹³And so faith, hope, love abide [faith -- conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope -- joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; love--true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], these three; but the greatest of these is love.

We see the importance of love here. What should be inferred in verse 11 is that when we don't love like this, we are but spiritual children or babies. But when God's love is developed in us, we become spiritually mature and capable of handling more responsibilities from God and able to receive more from God. Love's key opens the door and allows us to enter into a greater relationship with God. In John 15 (*The Amplified Bible*) Jesus says:

¹I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser.

²Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit.

³You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the Word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you].

⁴Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.

⁵I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.

⁶If a person does not dwell in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken-off] branch, and withers; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and they are burned.

⁷If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

⁸When you bear (produce) much fruit, My Father is honored and glorified, and you show and prove yourselves to be true followers of Mine.

⁹I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me].

¹⁰If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love.

¹¹I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.

¹²This is My commandment: that you love one another [just] as I have loved you.

¹³No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends.

¹⁴You are My friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do.

¹⁵I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.]

¹⁶You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you [I have planted you], that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting [that it may remain, abide],

so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], He may give it to you.

¹⁷This is what I command you: that you love one another.

This is a commandment from Jesus. In the next several chapters we are going to discover why Jesus has commanded us to love one another.

CHAPTER 2

Love's *Law*

In order to understand the *power of love*, we have to understand the *law of love*. When I was a child I had a hard time understanding the purpose of the Bible. I thought that it was a book of rules, not a book of love. I thought: "If I kept the laws, I would get into Heaven. If I broke the laws, I would go to Hell." This created within me an image of a disgruntled, mad, all-powerful God, who was ready to strike me down at the first sign of my failure! I had no concept of His love, the blood of Jesus or my righteousness.

Though it seems comical now, I am probably not the only Christian -- who at some point along their spiritual journey -- shared this view. Many Christians probably still view God as an angry, not loving, God. When we accept Jesus, we are made righteous. We are in right-standing with God because when God looks at us, He sees the blood of Jesus. We can't earn our righteousness by keeping the law. Rather, righteous people *obey* the law. Jesus came not to replace the law, but to fulfill the promise of the law.

Think about it this way. In all the years that God's chosen people *possessed* the Law of Moses and *knew* the Law, they could not *keep* the Law. They constantly failed to *obey* the Law. Because of this they became more conscious of the penalty of the Law out of fear of God than, they did the promise of the Law out of love for God. From the beginning of time, God knew that this would be the case.

So, He sent his Son to redeem us (save us) from the penalty of the law. Through Jesus, He circumcises us (marks us as His own) and writes the law on our hearts.

The Commandments of Love

In an encounter with the teachers of the law (the priests and religious leaders of His time), Jesus was questioned about which law was the greatest. These leaders were trying to show Him up or test His knowledge, because there were thousands of laws besides the *Ten Commandments*. In **Matthew 22:37-40** (*The Amplified Bible*):

³⁷And He replied to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect).

³⁸This is the great (most important, principal) and first commandment.

³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.

⁴⁰These two commandments sum up and upon them depend all the Law and the Prophets.

Wow, what a response! Jesus is saying that all of the laws, every ordinance is summed up in two: *love God and love your neighbor*. In fact, if you look at the *Ten Commandments* you can see that the first four commandments are easily summed up by the greatest commandment to *love God*. Let's look at the greatest commandment again, according to Jesus:

“Love God” (Matthew 22:37-40, *The Amplified Bible*):

³⁷And He replied to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect).

³⁸This is the great (most important, principal) and first commandment.

To love God means that you have put nothing else above Him: not your cares; not your worries; not your spouse; not your children, not your

family; not your friends; not your job; not your career; not your thoughts; not your feelings; not even your ministry! Compare the greatest commandment to the first four of the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God.

The First Commandment (Exodus 20:3, *The Amplified Bible*)

³You shall have no other gods before or besides Me.

There is only one true God and our access to Him is through the blood of Jesus. We must settle on the fact that His Word is the final authority in our lives.

The Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4, *The Amplified Bible*)

⁴You shall not make yourself any graven image [to worship it] or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Obviously, this commandment is clear that we shouldn't worship idols like gods made in the images of animals or any objects. But, there is a deeper meaning here as well. The media has produced powerful cultural icons that influence the way their audiences think and feel. We must be careful not to allow the entertainment industry or information media to shape our decisions. Our decisions can't be made based off of what we've seen on television, they must be made based on the Word of God.

The Third Commandment (Exodus 20:7, *The Amplified Bible*)

⁷You shall not use or repeat the name of the Lord your God in vain [that is, lightly or frivolously, in false affirmations or

profanely]; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

God's name is powerful. Of course, it should not be used in profanity, but His name should not be used in a carefree and cavalier manner, either. The fact that we have the right to call him Father was a right we received because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We should get to know God more intimately by getting to know His names and the attributes of His character. For instance, if we are praying for healing for ourselves or for someone else, we should call on the name *Jehovah Rapha*, "the Lord God who heals."

To my staff, I am known as Mr. Mitchell, but to my parents I am "Son;" to my daughter I am "Daddy;" and to my wife I am, "Poppy!" Now, if some stranger who doesn't know me calls me "Poppy" we have a problem! I don't know that person and that name is an expression of intimacy reserved only for my wife!

Because God has granted us access to call on His name, we must use each occasion as an opportunity to reverence Him by honoring His name, not abusing it.

The Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8, *The Amplified Bible*)

*⁸[Earnestly] remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
(withdrawn from common employment and dedicated to God).*

In **Mark 2:27-28**, Jesus tells us that He is the Lord of the Sabbath and that the Sabbath is made for man. In Matthew, he says it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, the day of rest, is symbolic of entering into God's rest. By obeying God, to do whatever He directs you to do, you cease from "toil" or "common employment" and enter into the ability to get things done in God's strength.

Now compare the *second* greatest commandment with the last six commandments of the *Ten Commandments*.

“Love Your Neighbor” (Matthew 22:39, *The Amplified Bible*)

³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.

“Loving your neighbor as yourself,” means that you put others first. Others include your enemies and those that persecute you. Why? God seeks to redeem their lives, too. When someone wrongs you, but you choose to love them instead of “fighting fire with fire,” you please God. And God, will address the situation on your behalf.

The Fifth Commandment (Exodus 20:12)

¹²Regard (treat with honor, due obedience, and courtesy) your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you.

Honor should be bestowed upon your parents. Your natural parents are not necessarily your biological parents, but those who nurtured and cared for you -- those who raised you. Love and forgiveness must be extended to your biological mother and father, as well, even if they were not good parents. Spiritual parents (your pastors or spiritual mentors), those who have nurtured you spiritually, must also be honored.

By submitting and respecting those in authority over you, you cultivate honor in your life. There are eight ways to honor your true (natural and spiritual) parents:

1. *View them as gifts from God;*
2. *Get to know them intimately;*
3. *Hold them in high regard;*
4. *Pray for them;*
5. *Communicate with them;*
6. *Follow them (in things that are acceptable to God);*
7. *Obey them (as long as it is not contrary to the Word); and,*
8. *Submit to them.*

The Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20:13)

¹³You shall not commit murder.

Murder is a violation of God's law. This does not include self defense or protection under the law or even war, but it does include the taking of innocent life both born and unborn.

The Seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14)

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

Adultery is typically described when a person has sexual relations with someone other than their spouse. However, sex is just a surface issue. The act of sex is an expression of intimacy. When you give your heart (the intimate feelings, thoughts and love reserved by God for your wife or husband) to someone other than your spouse, you are committing adultery. Jesus says when a man or woman looks lustfully upon someone other than their wife or husband they have committed adultery in their hearts.

The Eight Commandment (Exodus 20:15)

¹⁵You shall not steal.

The Ninth Commandment (Exodus 20:16)

¹⁶You shall not witness falsely against your neighbor.

The Tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house, your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

The underlying principle for commandments eight through ten are the same. Stealing, lying and covetousness are born out of selfishness. When you are selfish you become your own God and your flesh (your way of thinking) becomes king. You do what you want, when you want and how you want. By sowing to your flesh you reap corruption. The more fleshy you are, the more your appetite for things that don't belong to you increases. You begin to try to rationalize your thoughts that justify your behavior. Remember, Adam and Eve *stole* the fruit from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. When confronted with their actions, Adam justified his part by telling a half-truth -- blaming Eve -- instead of taking responsibility. Why? When Satan suggested to Eve that they were missing out on something by not eating from the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* she began to covet what she could not have! She then presented the fruit to Adam, a willing and eager participant. Negative thoughts and imaginations, if not corrected by the Word, will cut-off the power and presence of God in our lives; ultimately affecting our relationship with Him and our ability to carry out His Will while relating to our neighbors.

The Love Principle

The reason God wants us in right relationship with Him is because by doing so His power and might can flow through us to accomplish what He has mandated us to do in the Earth. When we dishonor Him we block the flow of His power. When we covet or desire what our neighbors have or do them harm, we are demonstrating our unbelief. The only reason we want what someone else has is that we don't believe that God will give us something of our own. Staying in right relationship with God and those around us is demonstrating our trust in His Word.

Cain did not trust God. When an opportunity was presented for he and his brother Abel to honor God with their increase, Cain gave God a portion (an offering) of his harvest from his fields, but Abel gave God the best the (*firstlings, firstborn, fat portion*) of his flock. And because God respected Abel, Cain was overcome by competitive jealousy and killed his brother!

God's love was available to Cain, but he chose jealousy. Instead of rejoicing with his brother, he coveted the favor that his brother received from God. If Abel had lived, I believe he would have forgiven his brother for the attack, because Abel operated in the character and likeness of God.

When we begin to see others as God sees them, we'll understand that all of His children (all of us) were with Him in spirit before the Earth was created. Our lives didn't begin when we were born into the world, but God intimately knew us before time.

God's instructions on love are designed for us to live in harmony with him and each other. He desires for us not to curse and hate each other, but to use His love and His Words as tools of redemption. He wants all of His children returned to Him. Many people have heard of *The Golden Rule*. It has been

pared down to read: "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." However, this simplified version leaves some important pieces out. So let's look at it in its entirety in **Matthew 7:12** (*The Amplified Bible*).

¹²So then, whatever you desire that others would do to and for you, even so do also to and for them, for this is (sums up) the Law and the Prophets.

Again, we see a universal principle. Whatever feelings, thoughts, attitudes and actions that we desire from others, we have to first extend those feelings, thoughts and actions toward them. We can take this a step further. Let's put God, our Father, in this situation. Since the greatest commandment is to love God with all of our hearts, and the second commandment is to love our neighbors, we can look at **Matthew 7:12** this way:

So then, whatever you desire that (God and) others would do to and for you, even so do also to and for (God and) them, for this is (sums up) the Law and the Prophets.

When you insert God into the equation, it is easy to understand just how love works. Before you ask anything of Him, have you done something for Him? Have you extended love to others as an expression of your love for Him? The Bible is clear (just ask Cain), "you will reap, what you sow!" Instead of sowing jealousy, bitterness, strife, hatred, or ill-will, why not sow God's love in the lives of others and in return reap a harvest of love!

CHAPTER 3

Love's *walk*

You may want to love others, but perhaps you don't know how or you have been deeply injured and profoundly hurt by someone. You may even have been a victim of an attack or the target of someone's wrath. It may be the fact that the person who injured you is a Christian or a family member!

Indeed, there are times when we have suffered at the hands of another as a result of what could be described as the unforgivable offense. Or, we may have been hurt so badly that we'll say, "I can *forgive*, but I'll never *forget!*" If we try to love with human love, the above statements are true. But, God's love is not human love. It has the power to overcome any situation, any hurt or any pain.

Do it in God's power, not your power

A very familiar scripture located in **Philippians 4:13** (*King James Version*) says we: "can do all things through Christ who strengthens us." The *Amplified Bible's* version of **Philippians 4:13** says:

¹³I have strength for all things in Christ Who *empowers* me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who *infuses inner strength into* me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].

It is the Christ in us who *empowers* us and infuses *inner strength* into us to *forgive the unforgivable*. As a journalist and media executive, I have had an opportunity to meet many people in life who have inspired me with their stories of courage, hope and determination. But there is one that describes *forgiving the unforgivable* more than any other.

I once met a gentleman who served 17 years for a crime he did not commit. Sure, everybody says they're innocent; the only problem is that he really was innocent as recent DNA evidence proved that he was the wrong man. This man had lost everything in his early 20s when he was imprisoned. He lost his reputation, his dignity, his family, his identity, and his life! No one believed him.

Then, he found God.

While in prison, he gave his life to Christ! The more he read his Bible; the more he felt God's love. While praying, one day, God told him to forgive everyone who had persecuted him (Matthew 5:44). This meant the prosecutors, the judge, the news media and his family and friends who turned their backs on him.

He obeyed God.

He says that he first asked God to help him genuinely forgive those individuals who had ruined his life. Next, he meditated on God's Word (scriptures on) love. Finally, he forgave his persecutors and began to pray daily blessings over their lives.

Shortly after this a non-profit legal defense agency for the wrongly accused took up his case. And, in a very short amount of time they discovered flaws in the old prosecutor's case and convinced a new prosecutor to order DNA tests. To everyone's surprise, this convicted felon was innocent -- everyone except for him and the Lord, that is!

It wasn't long at all before he was released from prison and received a new lease on life. Now, he has turned his ordeal into his life's calling as an author, speaker and counselor for the wrongly accused! And, by the way, he got married after his release and has a new family!

Nothing is impossible with God! When we trust God and operate in His love, we are blessed. The blessing gives us an ability and a power to overcome. **Ephesians 1:2-4** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²May grace (God's unmerited favor) and spiritual peace [which means peace with God and harmony, unity, and undisturbedness] be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

³May blessing (praise, laudation, and eulogy) be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual (given by the Holy Spirit) blessing in the heavenly realm!

⁴Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love.

Again, it bears repeating that the love exhibited by the gentlemen in the story was not human. It was not produced by his emotions, but rather by God's power. **Philippians 2:13-14** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹³[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.

The power that is at work in us is love. When we allow God's love to operate fully in our lives, we begin to develop a greater awareness of who we are in Christ. In addition, we are able to hear and understand God's instructions more clearly. **Philippians 1:9-11** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

⁹And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight [that

your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment],

¹⁰So that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value [recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral differences], and that you may be untainted and pure and unerring and blameless [so that with hearts sincere and certain and unsullied, you may approach] the day of Christ [not stumbling nor causing others to stumble].

¹¹May you abound in and be filled with the fruits of righteousness (of right standing with God and right doing) which come through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One), to the honor and praise of God [that His glory may be both manifested and recognized].

The power of God's love also prevents us from causing others to stumble (verse 10). The more we love others, we begin to realize that we must be careful not to offend or cause them to fall. Too often, our focus is only on asking God to help us forgive others, but we need to make sure that we also ask Him help us not to offend others, as well!

The more we understand what God's love is; we will strive to be more like Him. This is not a one time event or decision. It is a lifelong process with every decision being vetted by the Word of God and reflective of His love. **Ephesians 4:21-24** (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²¹Assuming that you have really heard Him and been taught by Him, as [all] Truth is in Jesus [embodied and personified in Him],

²²Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion;

²³And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude],

²⁴And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness.

Psalms 46:10 (*King James Version*) says, "Be still and know that I am God!" *My translation of this*: "You must cease to exist (by dying to self) and discovering that 'I AM' love so that you may be filled with love in abundance to the full, till it overflows producing the God kind of life through Christ."

But how do you actually die to self?

Lay down your will

Laying down your will means putting God first in everything you do. As you put God first you will become more sensitive to His Word and obey Him quickly. It's one thing to hear God's Word and even to receive it. But you must obey it. The Bible tells us that *faith without works is dead*. James 1:22 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²²But be doers of the Word [obey the message], and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves [into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth].

During his encounter with Jesus, Peter is an example of the applied truth of James 1:22. He laid down his own will by hearing and obeying Jesus even when His words didn't seem to make sense. Luke 5:1-11 (*The Amplified Bible*) is very revealing. Let's take a look:

¹NOW IT occurred that while the people pressed upon Jesus to hear the message of God, He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee).

²And He saw two boats drawn up by the lake, but the fishermen had gone down from them and were washing their nets.

³And getting into one of the boats, [the one] that belonged to Simon (Peter), He requested him to draw away a little from the shore. Then He sat down and continued to teach the crowd [of people] from the boat.

⁴When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon (Peter), Put out into the deep [water], and lower your nets for a haul.

⁵And Simon (Peter) answered, Master, we toiled all night [exhaustingly] and caught nothing [in our nets]. But on the ground of Your word, I will lower the nets [again].

⁶And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish; and as their nets were at the point of] breaking,

⁷They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and take hold with them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

⁸But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

⁹For he was gripped with bewildering amazement [allied to terror], and all who were with him, at the haul of fish which they had made;

¹⁰And so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon (Peter). And Jesus said to Simon, Have no fear; from now on you will be catching men!

¹¹And after they had run their boats on shore, they left everything and joined Him as His disciples and sided with His party and accompanied Him.

After toiling all day and catching no fish, Peter *obeys* Jesus by allowing him to use his boat. A fisherman all of his life; he was probably down at this point. His livelihood; his ability to pay his bills and feed his family, was dependent on a good catch. He caught nothing. He was in drought. And to make matters worse (as he must have felt), he is tired and here comes this fellow asking to use his boat to preach!

At this point Peter has to ignore his emotions and his tired body in order to grant this man's request. He ignores his feelings and agrees to use his boat for Jesus! After completing His sermon, Jesus turns to Peter and tells him to put his boat out in deep water and to let down his nets.

Now, wait just a minute!

Peter is an expert fisherman. His experience says there are no fish. His training says it's time to pack it in for the day. His emotions say "don't believe the hype!" Yet, Peter says: "We've been out here all night and have caught nothing, never-the-less, at your word, we'll do it again."

No sooner than Peter obeys the command of Jesus does he catch a great number of fish; so many that he has to get his partners in the other boat to help him. Both boats are filled with so many fish that they begin to sink!

We must understand the impact of this miracle in business terms. What do you think Peter does with all of those fish? He is a fisherman. He sells them in the marketplace and reaps a material harvest. He pays off any debts (as is the custom); provides for his family, and follows Jesus into the ministry.

The Bible tells us that the “thief comes to kill, steal and destroy.” Satan, being the thief that he is, was stealing Peter’s rightful harvest. But, Jesus, “who has come that we might have life and have it more abundantly,” shows up and blesses Peter’s *obedience* which produces the biggest catch of his entire career!

Peter didn’t just *hear*, but he *obeyed!* With less of you and what you think, there is more of Jesus and what He Wills! In order to stay in the Will of God, you must stay in His Word. Obedience to the Word produces true success.

Meditate on the Word

In order to walk in love and to allow the power of love to work in and through you, you must meditate on God’s Word. **Joshua 1:8** (*King James Version*) says:

⁸This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

I’d like to examine three words in this scripture in detail. **Meditate** means to *think, intend and plan*. And another word for **good** is *considerable*, which means a “good amount.” The Hebrew word for **success** is *saw-kal* which means *wisdom*. And the definition of wisdom is the *practical application of knowledge*. By applying these definitions to **Joshua 1:8** it reads:

“This book of the law (the Bible or the Word of God) shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall think, intend and plan on it therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou

shalt have considerable wisdom or the practical application of knowledge.”

When you practically apply knowledge, your spirit discovers what to do even when your mind doesn't. The more you *mutter* (constantly repeat quietly to yourself) the Word of love (God), the more you will begin to abide in the love of Christ and Christ will abide in you. Proverbs 16:3 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

³Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed.

Your ability to walk in love is greatly enhanced by changing the way you think. In order to walk in love, you must renew your mind about God's love. A new inflow of thoughts will produce a new you. Romans 12:2 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Seek God's faith

Faith is the Word of God applied with the obedience to do what it says in your life. Hebrews 11:1 (*King James Version*) says:

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

A little later in **Hebrews 11:3** the Bible says about faith: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Faith is a creative force. If you go back and look at the Book of Genesis, you'll see how God used faith to create the Earth. Whatever God "said," God "saw."

Once you receive the Word on a situation, whether your healing, or your provision, you have to properly correspond by speaking it. For example, If you received a scripture on healing, then you say: "*According to Isaiah 53:5, by Jesus stripes, I am healed.*" If you received a scripture on provision, then you say: "*According to Philippians 4:19, my God shall supply all my needs according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus.*" You don't get thrown off of your confession based on what you see. Remember, God spoke light, when it was dark! God made us in His image and His likeness with His attributes. We have to apply our faith, just as He applied His. The key, though, is that God already knew the end of creation before the beginning -- before He spoke it. He only spoke about the image that He possessed (or saw) on the inside of Him. Likewise, when we speak our faith, it should be based on what we see already formed on the inside of us. And the mental picture we see on the inside of us is formed as a result of the words that we are meditating on. Let me offer an illustration:

When I am hungry and go out for lunch I go through a process. Before I even decide where to go, images of food flash in my mind. I see pictures of burgers, fries and fried chicken -- things that are not healthy for me -- and I see images of baked chicken, turkey, fish and mixed green salads -- foods that are healthy for me! At this point, whatever I meditate on and mutter to myself ("Even, though I shouldn't have it, I really want Popeye's golden fried chicken today") will direct my path. Now that I know that I want Popeye's chicken, I am headed to the nearest Popeye's. I am not headed to KFC, I am not headed to Buffalo Wings, I am programmed for Popeye's -- a specific location, to order a

specific type and taste of fried chicken. All I have is an image in my head, but it is moving me. Once I pull up at the drive through window, I look with my natural eyes at the pictures and words on the menu selection. The advertisement that most accurately depicts what's in my mind is what I'll choose. At this point, I have to place my order by telling the attendant what I want. I have to use my voice and speak into the microphone so that my order can be heard. Meditating (reading, studying and looking) on the menu won't give my order. Only by speaking can I give my order.

Once I give my order, I am expecting in my heart that as I approach the window, my order will be ready. While I am driving the short distance between the order menu and the pick-up window, the order is being prepared. I don't know how they are preparing it. I don't know what they are doing in the kitchen. I don't need to. I am fully expecting it to be ready once I arrive at the window. How, is irrelevant.

Once I get to the window, I find out how much I owe and I pay for my meal and then receive exactly what I ordered and the transaction is complete. Finally, I am able to enjoy with my mouth what I ordered with my mouth. In essence, I am actually able to eat my words!

Romans 10:17 (*The Amplified Bible*) tell us:

¹⁷So faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching [of the message that came from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself).

Without faith it is impossible to please God for “we walk by faith not by sight.” Our love walk is a walk of faith! It is not based on our emotions. Even when He was in prison, John the Baptist began to doubt Jesus. In fact, he sent

his followers to question Jesus. In **Matthew 11:3** (*The Amplified Bible*) John's followers ask Jesus: "Are you the one, or should we expect another?" In other words, if you're the one, how could you let me sit in this jail! Here's how Jesus responds in **Matthew 11:4-6** (*The Amplified Bible*):

⁴And Jesus replied to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see:

⁵The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed (by healing) and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news (the Gospel) preached to them.

⁶And blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is he who takes no offense at Me and finds no cause for stumbling in or through Me and is not hindered from seeing the Truth.

Jesus instructs John's followers to "tell" (not write) him about the miracles of His ministry. He does this because "faith comes by hearing." John needed to hear the confirmation of the things he believed, and so did his followers. Then Jesus addresses the real issue head on - John is offended. Jesus, said "blessed (happy, fortunate and to be envied)" is the man who "takes no offense" because of Him. When you decide to walk in God's love and apply it toward others, you will be tested. People will call you "weak", "stupid", "crazy", "soft" and all sorts of names to provoke you. But Jesus says that if this happens and you don't get offended, you're blessed! They call you "dumb", but Jesus calls you "blessed!"

Whose words would you rather believe?

When you reach the point where your love walk is causing you to be persecuted, you have to realize that only "Jesus can help you finish the race that is set before you." The Apostle Paul, who was persecuted for accepting

Jesus, both by the Jews and by Christians (whom he once persecuted himself), said in **Philippians 3:13-15** (*The Amplified Bible*):

I do not consider, brethren, that I have captured and made it my own [yet]; but one thing I do [it is my one aspiration]: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press toward the goal (mark) to win the [supreme and heavenly] prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward. So let those [of us] who are spiritually mature and full-grown have this mind and hold these convictions; and if in any respect you have a different attitude of mind, God will make that clear to you also. Only let us hold true to what we have already attained and *walk* and order our lives by that.

Hebrews 12:2 (*The Amplified Bible*) tells us:

²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

As we come to the end of our faith, our believing and our strength; God takes over. It's like you're running a relay race with two runners instead of four. On your team of faith are Jesus and YOU! Jesus is running the first leg to get things started and then he passes you the baton to run the second leg and the third leg and when you get tired, you pass the baton to Jesus who is waiting to receive it from you, so that He can run the anchor leg and finish the race in victory!

It is you and Jesus against Satan and the world and with Jesus in the lead-off spot and in the anchor position, you'll always win! No matter how many times you run the race and no matter how slow or terrible you run your part, He will always win the gold medal by outrunning the competition.

However, we have to know who our competition is. Our competition is Satan (and his demons and fellow thug spirits) not people. The Bible (**Ephesians 6:12**) clearly tells us that “our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities.” Our love toward those who are negatively influenced to do us wrong is the key to their deliverance and the defeat of the devil and his plans! Again, The Bible says that “perfect love, casteth out fear!” Most of the negative issues or feelings that we have with or against other people and that other people have with us are rooted in fear. Selfishness is rooted in fear. Hatred is rooted in fear. Strife is rooted in fear. Unforgiveness is rooted in fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. You build up your faith to love God’s way, by listening to messages on God’s love, over and over and over again!

Pray for your enemies

While praying for our enemies: those who persecute and despitefully use us; we should pray for peace and God’s blessing to operate in their lives. No matter what injustice or harm they have caused us we do not pray for God to “get them.” That would be called witchcraft! Our prayers should be a reflection of God’s love for them and for us and His desire for us to live in harmony with Him. So our armor is God’s love. Here, then, is the full description of our armor in **Ephesians 6:11-18** (*The Amplified Bible*):

¹¹Put on God's whole armor [the armor of a heavy-armed soldier which God supplies], that you may be able successfully to stand up against [all] the strategies and the deceits of the devil.

¹²For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.

¹³Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place].

¹⁴Stand therefore [hold your ground], having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God,

¹⁵And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace.

¹⁶Lift up over all the [covering] shield of saving faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked [one].

¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God.

¹⁸Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people).

The last phrase of this section is the most poignant. It says: "... interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people)." Intercession is the most powerful expression of love available to man. When someone injures you or does you harm, your healing comes as a result of your willingness to forgive, forget and to pray for them! It takes no power to love those that love you. That's easy. That's comfortable. But, if you want the power of God to flow freely in your life, you have to be willing to extend your prayer life to cover those who don't like, or, who may even hate you. The next passages of scripture illuminate this point. Read them carefully and let the Words of Jesus sink into your spirit. Luke 6:27-37 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²⁷But I say to you who are listening now to Me: [in order to heed, make it a practice to] love your enemies, treat well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred,

²⁸Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you].

²⁹To the one who strikes you on the jaw or cheek, offer the other jaw or cheek also; and from him who takes away your outer garment, do not withhold your undergarment as well.

³⁰Give away to everyone who begs of you [who is in want of necessities], and of him who takes away from you your goods, do not demand or require them back again.

³¹And as you would like and desire that men would do to you, do exactly so to them.

³²If you [merely] love those who love you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the [very] sinners love their lovers (those who love them).

³³And if you are kind and good and do favors to and benefit those who are kind and good and do favors to and benefit you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the preeminently sinful do the same.

³⁴And if you lend money at interest to those from whom you hope to receive, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? Even notorious sinners lend money at interest to sinners, so as to recover as much again.

³⁵But love your enemies and be kind and do good [doing favors so that someone derives benefit from them] and lend, expecting and hoping for nothing in return but considering nothing as lost and despairing of no one; and then your recompense (your reward) will be great (rich, strong, intense, and abundant), and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind and charitable and good to the ungrateful and the selfish and wicked.

³⁶So be merciful (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) even as your Father is [all these].

³⁷Judge not [neither pronouncing judgment nor subjecting to censure], and you will not be judged; do not condemn and pronounce guilty, and you will not be condemned and pronounced guilty; acquit and forgive and release (give up resentment, let it drop), and you will be acquitted and forgiven and released.

Jesus sums it up perfectly. Enough said!

CHAPTER 4

Love's Power

Our working definition of power is “the ability or capacity to act or perform effectively; a specific capacity, faculty or aptitude; or, the ability to exercise control.” Before we obtain this power, it is first planted within us as a seed. Like a seedling grows into a plant, the power of God’s love must grow within us. It’s a process.

The seed of love

After destroying the Earth with the flood, God promised Noah that the Earth would never again be destroyed by water. In fact, God set in motion four processes that would never end. In Genesis 8:22 (*King James Version*) God says:

²²While the Earth remaineth, *seedtime and harvest*, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

For the purposes of our discussion, let’s zero in on *seedtime and harvest*. This means simply that there is a time to sow (or plant) and a time to reap (or harvest). Let’s define the parts of seedtime and harvest. Seed is the specialized part of a plant that produces a new plant. Seeds consist of three parts: (1) *the embryo*, (2) *the food storage tissue*, and (3) *the seed coat*. The embryo is the part of the seed from which the mature plant develops. It contains the parts that develop into the *primary root*; the stem; and the first leaves of the new plant. The food storage system stores the food that the embryo needs for growth. The seed coat covers the embryo and food storage tissue and protects them from injury, insects, and loss of water. Seed coats range from thin, delicate layers of tissue to thick, tough coverings. You can see by this process that everything that a plant or a tree is going to become is already contained within the seed.

How seeds sprout

Ripe seeds sprout through a process called *germination*. After being dispersed, most seeds remain dormant instead of germinating immediately. Dormancy prevents seeds from sprouting when conditions are not favorable for growth. For example, many seeds remain dormant during the cold winter months and germinate after temperatures start to rise in spring. Please note, that the seeds remain dormant until the conditions are favorable for growth.

Conditions required for seed germination include abundant *water*, an adequate supply of *oxygen*, and proper *temperatures*. Water softens the seed coat so that it breaks apart more easily. Oxygen supports the seeds rate of *respiration*. Respiration is the taking in of oxygen and the giving off of carbon dioxide. This process enables a germinating seed to burn food and thus produce energy for growth.

Temperature requirements for germination vary. Species that germinate in summer require higher temperatures than those that germinate in spring. Many seeds require a cold period before they can germinate. Some kinds of seeds need a certain amount of daylight to germinate. Many seeds will sprout only during the spring, when the number of daylight hours increases. Others sprout only in late summer or early fall, as days shorten.

After the seed coat breaks and germination starts, the part of the embryo begins to grow down into the soil (or ground). The developing roots anchor the seedling and absorb minerals and water that the embryo needs for further growth.

Farming

Farmers oversee the process of *seedtime and harvest*. Crop farming involves at least five separate operations: (1) *preparing the soil*, (2) *planting*, (3) *cultivating*, (4) *harvesting*, and (5) *processing and storage*.

Preparing the soil. The main purpose of soil preparation is to make a *seedbed*—that is, an area of soil in which seeds can be planted and in which they will sprout, take root, and grow. Most farmers make the seedbed by an age-old process called *tillage*. Tillage involves digging into the soil and mixing it. In other words the ground has to be broken up before receiving the seed.

Planting. Except in the warmest regions of the country, farmers plant most crops in the spring after the danger of frost has passed. Nearly all the field crops grown in the United States are planted by machines called *planters* or *drills*.

Cultivating. Cultivation is the process of managing the field and taking care of the crop and protecting it from pests and weeds. Herbicides applied before or during planting kill many kinds of weeds, but not all. Some weeds may therefore develop with the crops. In most cases, weeds are not a problem in small-grain fields because the plants grow close together.

Harvesting. Nearly all farmers in the United States harvest their field crops with machines. This is the process of *gathering* the produce of the field.

Processing and storage. Crops raised to supply food for human beings are called *food crops*. Many food crops tend to spoil quickly, and so farmers ship these crops to market as soon as possible after harvesting.

Now that we understand the natural process of *seedtime* and *harvest* with all of its definitions and parts, let's see what Jesus had to say about it. Slowly read and meditate on His Words to grasp the depth of their meaning. In Mark 4:3-9;14-20; 24-32 (*The Amplified Bible*) He says:

³Give attention to this! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

⁴And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

⁵Other seed [of the same kind] fell on ground full of rocks, where it had not much soil; and at once it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil;

⁶And when the sun came up, it was scorched, and because it had not taken root, it withered away.

⁷Other seed [of the same kind] fell among thorn plants, and the thistles grew and pressed together and utterly choked and suffocated it, and it yielded no grain.

⁸And other seed [of the same kind] fell into good (well-adapted) soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing, and yielded up to thirty times as much, and sixty times as much, and even a hundred times as much as had been sown.

⁹And He said, He who has ears to hear, let him be hearing [and let him consider, and comprehend]...

¹⁴The sower sows the Word.

¹⁵The ones along the path are those who have the Word sown [in their hearts], but when they hear, Satan comes at once and [by force] takes away the message which is sown in them.

¹⁶And in the same way the ones sown upon stony ground are those who, when they hear the Word, at once receive and accept and welcome it with joy;

¹⁷And they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while; then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away.

¹⁸And the ones sown among the thorns are others who hear the Word;

¹⁹Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.

²⁰And those sown on the good (well-adapted) soil are the ones who hear the Word and receive and accept and welcome it and bear fruit--some thirty times as much as was sown, some sixty times as much, and some [even] a hundred times as much...

²⁴And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you--and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.

²⁵For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away [by force],

²⁶And He said, The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed upon the ground,

²⁷And then continues sleeping and rising night and day while the seed sprouts and grows and increases--he knows not how.

²⁸The earth produces [acting] by itself--first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

²⁹But when the grain is ripe and permits, immediately he sends forth [the reapers] and puts in the sickle, because the harvest stands ready.

³⁰And He said, With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use to illustrate and explain it?

³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all seeds upon the earth;

³²Yet after it is sown, it grows up and becomes the greatest of all garden herbs and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air are able to make nests and dwell in its shade.

In order to clearly understand this parable, let's redefine the natural elements of *seedtime* and *harvest* described a little earlier in spiritual terms:

1. *Seed* is the *Word* of God.
 - a. The *embryo* is *love*.
 - b. The *food storage tissue* is *faith*.
 - c. The *coat* is the *Holy Spirit*.
2. *Plant* is *life*.
3. *Germination* is *growth*.
4. *Dormancy* is *patience*.
5. *Conditions* are *attitudes*.
6. *Water* is our *confessions* (the words that we speak).
7. *Oxygen* is *prayer*.
8. *Temperature* is *praise*.
9. *Soil* (ground) is our *heart*.
10. *Light* is *vision*.
11. *Respiration* is *revelation*.
12. *Minerals* are Godly thoughts.
13. The *farmer* is *man*.
14. The *grower* is *God*.

Now let's apply this to the process of *seedtime* and *harvest* by replacing the natural terms with the new spiritual definitions.

The *Word* (seed) is the specialized part of our lives that produces a new life. The *Word* (seed) consist of three parts: (1) *love* (embryo), (2) *faith* (food tissue storage), and (3) *the Holy Spirit* (the coat). *Love* (embryo) is the part of the *Word* (seed) from which the mature *life* (plant) develops. It contains the parts that develop into the *primary root*; the stem; and the first evidence (leaves) of the new life (plant). *Faith* (the food storage system) stores the food (words) that *love* (the embryo) needs for growth. The *Holy Spirit* (coat) covers *love* (embryo) and *faith* (food storage tissue) and protects them from the thief (Satan who seeks to kill, steal and destroy by using injury, insects, and loss of water). The *Holy Spirit* (coat) ranges from thin, delicate layers of tissue to thick, tough covering (depending on what is needed at the time). You can see by this process that everything that a *life* (plant) is going to become is already contained within the *Word* (seed).

How the Word (seed) sprouts

Ripe *Word* (seed) sprouts through a process called spiritual *growth* (germination). After being dispersed, the *Word* (seed) remains *patient* (dormant) instead of *growing* (germinating) immediately. *Patience* (Dormancy) prevents the *Word* (seed) from sprouting when attitudes (conditions) are not favorable for growth. For example, the *Word* (seeds) remains *patient* (dormant) and *grows* (germinates) after *praise* (temperatures) starts to rise. Please note, that the *Word* (seed) remains dormant until *attitudes* (conditions) are favorable for growth.

Attitudes (conditions) required for *Word* (seed) *growth* (germination) include abundant confession (*water*), an adequate supply of *prayer* (oxygen), and proper *praise* (temperatures). *Confession* (Water) moves

the *Holy Spirit* (coat) to *unveil* (remove the covering of) the *Word* (seed). *Prayer* (Oxygen) supports the *Word's* (seed) rate of *revelation* (respiration). *Revelation* (respiration) is the taking in of *prayer* (oxygen) and the giving off of *answers* (carbon dioxide). This process enables a *growing* (germinating) *Word* (seed) to burn food and thus produce *power* (energy) for spiritual development.

Praise (Temperature) requirements for *growth* (germination) vary. The *Word* that *grows* (germinates), when the challenges are the toughest in our lives, requires more *praise* (temperatures) than the *Word* (seed) that grows (germinate) when things are normal. Sometimes the *Word* (seed) needs a certain amount of *vision* (daylight) to *grow* (germinate)...

After the *Holy Spirit* (coat) *reveals* (unveils) the *Word* (seed) and *growth* (germination) starts, *love* (the embryo) begins to grow down into our *hearts* (soil or ground). The developing roots anchor the *Word* (seedling) and absorb the *Godly thoughts* (minerals) and *confession* (water) that *love* (embryo) needs for further development.

Can you clearly see the parallel between the elements needed for natural *seedtime* and *harvest* and spiritual *seedtime* and *harvest*? Before we compare the natural farming process with the spiritual farming process, let's get a deeper understanding of the *Word* and its attributes as a seed.

John 1:1 (*The Amplified Bible*) says the *Word is God*:

¹IN THE beginning [before all time] was the *Word* (Christ), and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God Himself.

I **John 4:7-8** (*The Amplified Bible*) says God is love, therefore the *Word* is love and love is a seed:

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is (springs) from God; and he who loves [his fellowmen] is begotten (born) of God and is coming [progressively] to know and understand God [to perceive and recognize and get a better and clearer knowledge of Him].

⁸He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love.

2 Corinthians 9:6-12 (*The Amplified Bible*) tells us that God gives the seed (the Word/love) to the sower (farmer) and describes the reward for a cheerful sower (farmer) of the Word/love:

⁶[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings.

⁷Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving].

⁸And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation].

⁹As it is written, He [the benevolent person] scatters abroad; He gives to the poor; His deeds of justice and goodness and kindness and benevolence will go on and endure forever!

¹⁰And [God] Who provides seed for the sower and bread for eating will also provide and multiply your [resources for] sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness [which manifests itself in active goodness, kindness, and charity].

¹¹Thus you will be enriched in all things and in every way, so that you can be generous, and [your generosity as it is] administered by us will bring forth thanksgiving to God.

¹²For the service that the ministering of this fund renders does not only fully supply what is lacking to the saints (God's people), but it also overflows in many [cries of] thanksgiving to God.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (*King James Version*) promises the guarantee of the Word's (love's) growth:

¹⁰For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

¹¹So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God's Word (love) will always return unto Him.

The harvest of love

A seed produces a harvest after its own kind. In Genesis 1:11-12 (*The Amplified Bible*), God said:

"... Let the earth put forth (tender) vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees yielding fruit whose seed is in itself, each according to its kind, upon the earth. And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation:

plants yielding seed according to their own kinds and trees bearing fruit in which was their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good (suitable, admirable) and He approved it.”

The *Word* (seed of love) produces a harvest of love. Love is the essence, the *embryo*, of the *Word*. Remember the *Love Principle*? Whatever, you do unto others and God, is what will come back to you. Again, a seed produces a harvest after its own kind. God wants us to walk in love, so that we will harvest love. Why? In love, all the things that we want and desire exist. Luke 16:10-12 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹⁰He who is faithful in a very little [thing] is faithful also in much, and he who is dishonest and unjust in a very little [thing] is dishonest and unjust also in much.

¹¹Therefore if you have not been faithful in the [case of] unrighteous mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions), who will entrust to you the true riches?

¹²And if you have not proved faithful in that which belongs to another [whether God or man], who will give you that which is your own [that is, the true riches]?

Notice that Jesus is talking about our faithfulness in small things. And then he says “therefore,” if you are not faithful in money issues who will trust you with the *true riches*. No matter how much we say we love God and our neighbors, the proof is not what we say with our mouths but it is with our actions. The Bible says that “where a man’s treasure is there, too, is his heart.” What we do with our daily appointment books and with our check books tell us where our hearts are located. In other words, what is important to us is indicated by the amount of time and money we freely and cheerfully dedicate to it. Money, time, and your skills (abilities) are your possessions. If you truly

love God and your neighbor, these things will be “sown” into the lives of others directed by and in obedience to, God’s instructions found in His Word.

You may give God your tithe (10% of your gross income) but if you don’t give him your heart (a cheerful attitude) with it, you have not “sown” in faith. You’ve simply gone through the process of giving. Beyond the tithe, you may give to the poor, but if you don’t give your best, you’re like Cain, whom God did not favor. Why? Because God doesn’t want your money, he wants your heart, and he does not have your heart if it is bound by money. Money is not evil, but the love of money is! God doesn’t want you to serve your money; He wants your money to serve you, so that you can freely serve Him!

Have you ever felt the urge to give? Someone comes up to you and you decide in your heart to give them what’s in your wallet. Only, you look in your wallet and notice that you have five \$20 bills! Immediately, your mind cancels out your heart, and you rationalize that God didn’t mean for you to give everything, so you just give the person one \$20 and say “God bless you!”

The problem with this scenario is your fear about losing your money was stronger than your faith to give and the trust in God’s ability to give more to you! This is why Jesus says, “if you have not proven faithful about that which belongs to God or another, who will give you that of your very own—the true riches.” If you are not willing to use your time, money, skills and possessions for God by helping others, why should God give you the “true riches” (the anointing of love) and its power, the ability, the might to expand your capacity to receive even more! But, if you are worthy, then the harvest is yours!

Now, if you’ve ever planted grass seed you know that there is a premium seed and a cheap seed. With the cheap blend, all sorts of things (weeds, dandelions, crabgrass, etc.) will also grow; however, with the premium blend, mostly pure grass will grow. According to Jesus’ own words the cheap seed is the money, and the premium seed is the “true riches.”

Luke 6:38 (*King James Version*) says:

³⁸Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

If you “give” money out of love, it “money” will come back to you in increasing measure. But, if you give your love (the “true riches,” your anointing with all of its elements, time, possessions AND money), you’ve given your heart. Thus, “it” no longer refers to just money, but God’s love, God’s blessing and God’s anointing to receive more! Notice, the semicolon after “it shall be given unto you;” means that the next clause is closely related to the first statement. I believe that this indicates that when we give the best that we have to offer out of our love for God and through God’s love to others, then God anoints us with the power of love. This power, then, moves men to bring resources (money, materials, and things) to us out of their love and obedience to God and because of His love for us! Love never fails!

Ephesians 3:16-20 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

¹⁶May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].

¹⁷May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,

¹⁸That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it];

¹⁹[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!

²⁰Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams].

Love is the power that works in us. And God will do exceedingly, abundantly, more than we can even ask or think according to the measure that we allow this power to work in us. When we walk in love, we are guaranteed a harvest! The question is whether the harvest will yield a 30, 60 or 100 times return on the seed sown. The answer to this question is determined by the degree we allow the power to work in us and by the decision that we've made to sow either money (cheap seed) or the "true riches" (premium seed).

The process

Let's apply what we've just learned about God's supernatural farming process to what we know about the natural farming process.

Man (Farmers) oversees the process of *seedtime and harvest*. Crop farming involves at least five separate operations: (1) *preparing the heart* (soil), (2) *planting*, (3) *cultivating*, (4) *harvesting*, and (5) *processing and storage*.

Preparing the heart. The main purpose of heart preparation is to create an environment which the *Word* can be planted and in which it will produce, take root, and grow. Tillage involves digging into the soil and mixing it. In other words, the ground has to be broken up before receiving the Word. God made the first Adam out of the dust of the earth. His physical body was earth or ground and God blew His life into him. Once Adam sinned, God sent His Son Jesus, also known as the last Adam. When we become born again, we receive Jesus into our hearts bringing with him a rich topsoil with nutrients and minerals to overcome the dry nutrient-less heart (ground) of a sinner.

Planting. By living for and obeying God's Word we plant His Will in our hearts through meditating (*thinking, intending, planning and muttering*) it over and over and making every decision by it.

Cultivating. Cultivation is the process of managing the field of our heart and protecting it from pests (Satan, powers and principalities) and weeds (the cares and anxieties of life). The Bible tells us to "guard our hearts because out of it flow the issues of life." The Bible also says to "hide the Word in our hearts so that we won't sin against God."

Harvesting. This is the process of *gathering* the harvest and results produced from the Word in our hearts.

Processing and storage. Like farmers, we are to take the harvest of love to the market place to distribute others. We do so, by distributing from the abundance of love stored in our hearts!

While we are the farmers, God is the grower! The Apostle Paul confirms this in **1 Corinthians 3:7-9**. He says: "⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor."

Here's another way to look at the process.

One of my mentors explained to me that when it came to getting a promotion on the job; the promotion (or output) was only equal to or greater than what you put into the job (input). This is real "*seedtime* and *harvest*." Indeed, we have seen for ourselves during this study that the Bible's version of input equals output is that a man *shall surely reap what he sows*. You will reap what's in your heart. Thoughts are created in your heart. Having love in your heart is the only way to see clearly what God wants you to do.

Vision is a mental picture of your destiny: seeing the future before it comes into being. Vision and revelation are the same things. Reveal means to unveil something on the inside of you. The blueprint of your life is contained in the seed (Word or thought) planted in your heart. Out of that Word the snapshot of your future will emerge.

Our heart is ground (it's our motivation). Our thought is seed (it's what we think). Our confession is water (it's what we speak). And our vision is light (it's revealed to us by God on the inside of us). And every seed (word or thought) of disadvantage from Satan has an equivalent seed (Word or thought) of advantage from God. Whatever seeds you put into your heart will grow. Think you can, think you can't, either way, you are right. If you put an apple seed in fertile ground, an apple tree will grow. If you put an orange seed in fertile ground an orange tree will grow.

"Now faith" (*Hebrews 11:1*) begins with thought. "Now faith" can be used to bring your vision for your business, your job, your future to pass, but you have to apply it now. Adversity is a weed that tries to kill your seed, your vision. Like a farmer your job is to plant the seed of your vision in mind. The Bible says: "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

Like a farmer you pull-up weeds of doubt and fear by remembering no matter what the circumstances look like you will achieve your goals in life because you walk by faith not by sight. Like a farmer, you must water and fertilize your ground or your mind by speaking positive words. When people around you say that you can't do something, let the words "I can, I am and I will" come bursting forth out of your mouth. Keep those words in your heart, meditating or thinking, intending and planning on those words day and night.

Once your vision (the seed of your life) is established deep in (your ground) the cavity of your heart, the Holy Spirit will overcome the pressure of life and begin to remove the covering of the seed and roots will form. The roots will anchor you. *YOU WILL BE PLANTED LIKE A TREE BY WATER.*

Soon, you'll begin to see the results of your labor as your seed begins to sprout and then grow and then mature into seed-bearing fruit. And because of God's promise, when you have "sown" the *true riches* into the lives of men and women of God -- like you do with tithes and offerings -- God will "open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing so that there will not be enough room to receive it." And God "will rebuke the devour (Satan) for your sake, and he (Satan) shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the set time in the field. And all the nations of the Earth will call you blessed and a *delightful land.*" (*Malachi 3:8-10*)

I'd like to focus on the "*delightful land*" part. When fruit bearing trees release their fruit it is either eaten or falls to the ground. When it ripens and even rots, it opens up and the seeds of that fruit fall into the ground and give birth to new trees. Our visions are not for us, they are for others and our job is to sow the "seeds" of His visions into the hearts of mankind. So you see the anointing or *love* that fuels our vision is provided for us to reach this final destination in our lives. It's not about us; it's about *God and others.*

The system of love

When you walk in love, abide in love and love abides in you, you should have no worries. Everything we need is found in God and in His love. God's love conquers all! No matter what you are dealing with, love is the key.

*For poverty, He gives us wealth;
For sickness, He gives us health; and,
For death, He gives us eternal life!*

Matthew 6:25-33 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²⁵Therefore I tell you, stop being perpetually uneasy (anxious and worried) about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink; or about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life greater [in quality] than food, and the body [far above and more excellent] than clothing?

²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?

²⁷And who of you by worrying and being anxious can add one unit of measure (cubit) to his stature or to the span of his life?

²⁸And why should you be anxious about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field and learn thoroughly how they grow; they neither toil nor spin.

²⁹Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his magnificence (excellence, dignity, and grace) was not arrayed like one of these. [1 Kings 10:4-7.]

³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and green and tomorrow is tossed into the furnace, will He not much more surely clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹Therefore do not worry and be anxious, saying, What are we going to have to eat? or, What are we going to have to drink? or, What are we going to have to wear?

³²For the Gentiles (heathen) wish for and crave and diligently seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need them all.

³³But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.

³⁴So do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble.

The key is found in verse 33. We must seek God's Kingdom (His Will, His Word and His Way of doing things) and then "all" things will be given to us. God has pleasure in our prosperity (Psalms 35:27). And He knows that the path through prosperity is found only in His system or in His Kingdom. 3 John 2 (*The Amplified Bible*) says:

²Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Remember, God's *love* is a power, ability, a capacity to dispense His goodness to others. True prosperity then is: "The ability (having more than enough) to meet the needs of others in every area of life." And obviously, in order to meet the needs of others you have to be abundantly supplied. Jesus "came so that we might have life and have it more abundantly -- not just in finances but in every area of our existence. So because Jesus dwells on the inside of every born again believer, believers have the power to have prosperous spirits, souls, relationships, finances and physical bodies!

Spiritual prosperity means that we have more than enough of God's Word to dispense His goodness and power to others through *His love, His righteousness, His covenant (promises)*.

Soul prosperity means that we have more than enough of God's thoughts, emotions and Will to dispense His goodness and power to others through *faith and prayer*.

Relational prosperity means that we have more than enough of God's peace in our lives to dispense His goodness and His power to others by yielding to *the Holy Spirit and by praising and worshiping Him*.

Financial prosperity means that we have more than enough of God's provision to dispense His goodness and power to others through our *giving and abundant living*.

The more we begin to use these precious opportunities to share God's love, the more we will be doing our part to expand God's Kingdom, while operating in His power!

The Power of *Love*: *It's The Key to Life*

INTRODUCTION: Love's *Story*

A. *Our testimony*

We all will discover that Jesus Christ is *The Power* and by living through Him, "we can do all things!"

B. *True love* Isaiah 58:6-12

I. CHAPTER 1: Love's *Key*

A. *Life is like a car*

B. *The Bible is your manual*

C. *"Love" is the key to the ignition*

1. God will only give you the keys when you are ready
2. You won't give your child the keys to your car, until they are ready.
 - a. Galatians 4:1-9 (*child, servant, slave*)
 - b. Galatians 5:5-6 (*heir, sonship*)

D. *Have to have the right key and the right manual*

E. *God provides directions through the Word*

1. Proverbs 3:5
2. Psalms 119:5

F. *What does John 3:16 mean?*

1. Luke 4:16-21
2. John 10:10
3. 2 Corinthians 8:8-9
4. Matthew 28:18-20
5. Romans 10:9

G. What is love?

1. Galatians 5:22
2. I John 4:7-15
3. Romans 13:8-9
4. I Corinthians 13
5. John 15

II. CHAPTER 2: Love's Law

A. The Commandments of Love

1. Matthew 22:37-40
2. Loving God (Commands 1-4) (Matthew 22:37-38)
 - a. 1-Exodus 20:3
 - b. 2-Exodus 20:4
 - c. 3-Exodus 20:7
 - d. 4-Exodus 20:8
3. Loving Your Neighbor (Matthew 22:39-40)
 - a. 5-Exodus 20:12
 - b. 6-Exodus 20:13
 - c. 7-Exodus 20:14
 - d. 8-Exodus 20:15
 - e. 9-Exodus 20:16
 - f. 10-Exodus 20:17

B. The Love Principle (The Golden Rule) -- Matthew 7:12

III. CHAPTER 3: Love's *walk*

A. *Do it in God's power, not your power*

1. Phil 4:13
2. Ephesians 1:3-4
3. Phil 2:13-14
4. Phil 1:9-11
5. Ephesians 4:20-24
6. Psalms 46:10

B. *Lay down your will* (Put God First)

1. James 1:22
2. Luke 5:1-11

C. *Meditation on the Word*

1. Joshua 1:8
 - i. think, intend, and plan
 - ii. mutter (confess and speak the word)
2. Proverbs 16:3
3. Romans 12:2

D. *Seek God's Faith to Walk in Love*

1. Hebrews 11:1
2. Romans 10:17
3. Matthew 11:4-6
4. Hebrews 12:2

E. *Pray for your enemies*

1. Ephesians 6:11-18
2. Luke 6:27-37

IV. CHAPTER 4: Love's *Power*

A. *The seed of love*

1. Genesis 8:22 (Seedtime & Harvest)
2. Mark 4:3-9;14-20; 24-25 (The Word is seed)
3. John 1:1 (The Word is God)
4. I John 4:7-8 (God is love; The Word is love and Love is a seed)
5. 2 Corinthians 9:6-12
2. Isaiah 55:10-11

B. *The harvest of love*

1. Luke 6:38
2. Luke 16:10-12
3. Ephesians 3:16-20

C. *The system of love*

1. Matthew 6:25-33
2. Psalms 35:27

a. True prosperity: "having more than enough"

b. Total Live Prosperity (3 John 2)

- i. Spiritual Prosperity
 1. The Power of Love
 2. The Power of Righteousness
 3. The Power of the Covenant
- ii. Soul Prosperity
 1. The Power of the Word
 2. The Power of Faith
 3. The Power of Prayer
- iii. Relational Prosperity
 1. The Power of the Holy Spirit
 2. The Power of Praise
 3. The Power of Worship
- iv. Financial Prosperity
 1. The Power of Giving
 2. The Power in You
- v. Physical Prosperity
 1. The Power to Change

Confessions Based on *God's Love*

(say these out-loud daily)

I love the Lord my God with all my heart and with His love, I love my neighbor as I love myself. *(Matthew 22:37-40)*

My faith works through God's love for me and God's love in me. *(Galatians 5:6)*

God loves me so much, that he gave his Son, so that I would not perish, but have everlasting life. *(John 3:16)*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in my life, but Jesus came that I may have spirit, soul, relational, financial and physical prosperity in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of my life toward others. *(John 10:10)*

The power of the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of love in me. *(Galatians 5:22)*

God's love in me is not inflated with pride. It pays no attention to a suffered wrong. *(1 Corinthians 13:5)*

God's love in me believes the best of every person. It endures everything without weakening. *(1 Corinthians 13:7)*

God's love in me never fails. *(1 Corinthians 13:8)*

I am cleansed because of the Word which Jesus has given me. *(John 15:3)*

Whatever I ask my heavenly Father in the name of Jesus, He will give it to me. *(John 15:4-5; 15-16)*

I love my enemies and do good to those that persecute me, therefore, my reward will be great. *(Luke 6:33-35)*

God strengthens me with mighty power by the Holy Spirit. *(Ephesians 3:16-18)*

I am filled with the fullness of God's presence. *(Ephesians 3:19)*

With the *power of love* at work within me, I achieve supernatural results; more than I could ever imagine or pray for! *(Ephesians 3:20)*

Because God loves me, He protects my life...

I am the Body of Christ and Satan hath no power over me, for I overcome evil with good. (1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:21)

I forbid any sickness or disease to come upon my body. Every disease, germ and every virus that touches my body dies instantly in the name of Jesus. Every organ and every tissue of my body functions in the perfection to which God created it to function and I forbid any malfunction in my body, in the name of Jesus. (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:11; Gen. 1:31; Matt. 16:19)

Because God loves me, He provides for my material needs...

Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law. For poverty He has given me wealth; for sickness, He has given me health; for death He has given me eternal life. (2 Cor. 8-9; Is. 53:5-6; John 10:10; 5:24)

I have given and it is given unto me, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, men give into my bosom. (Luke 6:38).

With what measure I meet, it is measured unto me. I sow bountifully, therefore I reap bountifully. (2 Cor. 9:6-8)

The Lord has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants and Abraham's blessings are mine. (Ps. 35:27; Gal. 3:14)

Because God loves me, He gives me wisdom and guidance...

The Spirit of Truth lives in me and teaches me all things. I have perfect knowledge of every situation and circumstance that I face because I have the wisdom of God. (John 16:13; James 1:5)

I lean not unto my own understanding, but in all my ways I acknowledge God as He directs my path. (Prov. 3:5-6)

I am not conformed to this world, but am transformed by the renewing of my mind. My mind is renewed by the Word of God. (Eph. 1:17-18, Rom. 12:2)

Because God loves me, He gives me comfort and strength...

I am born of God and I have world-overcoming faith residing on the inside of me, for greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. (1 John 5:4; 1 John 4:4)

I will do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. *(Phil 4:13)*

The joy of the Lord is my strength. The Lord is the strength of my life.
(Neh. 8:10; Ps. 27:1)

The peace of God keeps my heart and my mind through Christ Jesus. I think on things that are good. *(Phil 4:7-8)*

I let no corrupt communication proceed out of my mouth. *(Eph. 4:29-30)*

I let the peace of God rule in my heart and I refuse to worry about anything.
(Col. 3:15)

In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind the principalities, the powers, the rulers of darkness of this world. I cast down spiritual wickedness in high places and render them ineffective against me. *(Matt. 16:19; John 16:23-24; Eph. 6:12)*

Because God loves me, He gives me favor...

Father thank You for making me righteous and accepted through the blood of Jesus. And, because of that I am blessed and highly favored by You. Your favor surrounds me.

Doors that were once closed, You're now opening them on my behalf. I have honor in the midst of my adversaries and an increase of assets, especially in real estate and an expansion of territory. Because I am highly favored by God, I have great victories, supernatural turnarounds and miraculous breakthroughs in the midst of great impossibilities.

I walk in the favor of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost everyday, all the time, every hour, every minute and every second favor cometh to me now in Jesus name, Amen!

Daily Meditation on *God's Love*

Day 1

Matthew 22:37;39 (*The Amplified Bible*)

³⁷And He replied to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect).

³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.

The reason God wants us in right relationship with Him is because by doing so His power will flow through us to accomplish what He has mandated us to do in the Earth. Staying in right relationship with God and those around us, through the *love* of Jesus, demonstrates our trust in God's Word.

Day 2

Galatians 5:6 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁶For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

Our life is like a *car* and *love* is the key to its ignition. We receive our inheritance (our assignment from God and along with it) a new and better life (or car), when we learn to conform to God's "Will, in purpose, thought and action" and through faith "activated and energized and expressed and working through (God's) *love*." However, as a car won't start without a key, neither will you start a new life without God's key -- *His love!*

Day 3

John 3:16 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. God gave us the greatest gift of all: His Son. Though this gift is the most expensive gift in the history of the world, Jesus already paid the price. It was given as a free gift to humanity. All we have to do is to receive it by making Jesus (*love*) the Lord over our lives!

Day 4

John 10:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁰*The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in our lives, but Jesus came that we may have *spiritual prosperity* ... in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of our lives toward others. *Spiritual prosperity* means that we have more than enough of God's Word to dispense His goodness and power to others through *His love, His righteousness and His covenant (promises)!*

Day 5

John 10:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁰*The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in our lives, but Jesus came that we may have *soul prosperity* ... in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of our lives toward others. *Soul prosperity* means that we have more than enough of God's thoughts, emotions and Will to dispense His goodness and power to others through *faith and prayer*.

Day 6

John 10:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁰*The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in our lives, but Jesus came that we may have *relational prosperity* ... in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of our lives toward others. *Relational prosperity* means that we have more than enough of God's peace in our lives to dispense His goodness and His power to others by yielding to *the Holy Spirit and by praising and worshiping Him*.

Day 7

John 10:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁰*The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in our lives, but Jesus came that we may have *financial prosperity* ... in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of our lives toward others. *Financial prosperity* means that we have more than enough of God's provision to dispense His goodness and power to others through our *giving and abundant living*.

Day 8

John 10:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

¹⁰*The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Satan came to steal, kill and destroy the prosperity in our lives, but Jesus came that we may have *health prosperity* ... in abundance; to the full; till it overflows out of our lives toward others. *Physical prosperity* means that we have more than enough of God's health to dispense His goodness and power to others by *changing* our physical bodies through exercise, proper nutrition and rest.

Day 9

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²*But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness)... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].*

When we operate in God's love, the evidence is the fruit of the spirit. And it is the fruit of the spirit that is to be shared with others. God's love for us and through us should be on display so that He gets the glory. Joy comes from our trust in God and His Word to prevail over any and all circumstances.

Day 10

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... peace... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *peace*... Jesus possesses the power of *peace*, which is beyond our own understanding. During His life, He remained calm during storms and was never anxious about anything. And likewise, the key to answered prayer is to cast all of your cares on God and to enter into the rest of Jesus, knowing confidently that He is able to handle your situation!

Day 11

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... patience... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of *love*, which produces *patience*... *Patience* means being *constant* in prayer, in seeking the Word and in praising God! The Bible tells us that through faith and patience, the promises of God are inherited! So remain *constant* (in Christ) and allow patience to produce results in your life!

Day 12

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... an even temper...Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces an *even temper*... You turn you anger and frustration over to God by finding His promise about your situation in His Word and trusting the Word more than your emotions!

Day 13

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... kindness ... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *kindness*... The dictionary defines *kindness* as: "The quality of being warm-hearted and considerate and humane and sympathetic." When you truly walk in the love of God your *kindness* toward others will be fueled by God's compassion for them.

Day 14

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... goodness... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *goodness*... The dictionary defines *goodness* as: "Moral excellence." Morality means doctrine. Our morality is founded on God's Word. Excellence means a "valuable quality." So in order to dispense *good*, it means that we will share God's *valuable Word* in conversation and action with others.

Day 15

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... faithfulness... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *faithfulness*... The Bible tells us that faith "is the substance of things that we hope for and the evidence of things not seen." It's when we believe God's Word and act on that belief. *Faithfulness* means "steadfast." The power of God's love enables us to remain steadfast in our *faith!*

Day 16

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and) ... gentleness... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *gentleness*... *Gentleness* means "mild mannered." A more practical definition is "a focused, but relaxed disposition." For example, a surgeon uses his *scalpel gently*, where as a butcher uses his *knife with force*. Both have to focus on what they are doing, but the surgeon *cuts with precision*, whereas the *butcher cuts with strength*. When you walk in God's love, you can communicate and approach others with ease, because the Word is sharp enough to cut through any situation for you!

Day 17

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and)... meekness... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *meekness*... *Meek* does not mean weak. The Bible says that the "meek shall inherit the Earth!" How? *Meekness* means "submissive." Meekness means that you have a "sub" "mission" to God's "vision" for your life. It means that you are submitted to His agenda and to His love. The meek inherit the Earth because they do it through God's power. Remember, Jesus was meek and showed it by *submitting* to the authorities over Him in Rome. The last time I checked, the Roman kingdom fell and His Kingdom rose!

Day 18

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and)... humility... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *humility*... **Humility** is a misunderstood word. People often confuse self-degradation -- sayings like "I am not worthy" -- with humility. These statements do not indicate humility but foolishness! According to the Bible, humility is the polar opposite of pride. Prideful people seek to do things their own way; in their own power; according to their own interest. Humble people do things according to God's Will!

Day 19

Galatians 5:22 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love (and)... self-control... Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge].

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our lives bear the fruit of love, which produces *self-control*... The love of God will restrain you from doing the things that you don't want to do or that are not good for you. Love's power is stronger than the strongest addiction. Whether it's chocolate or drugs, God's love for you and operating in you, has given you the ability to prevent *you* from hurting *you*!

Day 20

1 Corinthians 13:4 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁴Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

God's love in us endures long and is patient and kind. The power to "fight the good fight of faith" comes from God's love. Kindness is a derivative of His compassion. God's love in you causes you to rejoice at the success of others instead of burning with envy!

Day 21

1 Corinthians 13:5 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁵*(God's love) is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking...*

God's love in us is not concerned with getting the advantage over others, but giving the advantage to others.

Day 22

1 Corinthians 13:5 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁵*(God's love) is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].*

God's love focuses us on our righteousness in Christ, not our rightness in law. Only the righteous cancel debts; free the guilty or pray for their persecutors. God's love enables us to graciously (and quickly) forgive and forget any injustice that we have suffered.

Day 23

1 Corinthians 13:6 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁶*(God's love) does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.*

God's love is *Truth* and His *Truth* sets us free from injustice and free from disobedience. Our righteousness means that we seek to do things according to God's Will, God's Way and God's Word. The power of God's love preserves our relationship with Him and our obedience serves as an example for others to follow.

Day 24

1 Corinthians 13:7 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁷*Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person...*

God's love enables us to deal with any and every situation. The Bible tells us that "we can do (and endure) all things" through Christ (and His love) that strengthens us. This includes believing (and not doubting) the best of every person. Our thoughts attract what we think. If we think on the *best in people*, our thoughts will attract the *best from people!*

Day 25

1 Corinthians 13:7 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁷*(The) hopes (of God's love) are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].*

God's love produces hope. According to the Bible, "with God, nothing is impossible." *Believing* strengthens us when the pressures of life weaken us.

Day 26

1 Corinthians 13:8 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁸*Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].*

God's love for us and in us is eternal. It never gives up, never fails, and never ends. Therefore, we should never cease loving our neighbors or ourselves. Failure is not an option! Once you receive God's Word on a situation, continue to thank Him continually until the answer can be seen.

Day 27

John 15:3 (*The Amplified Bible*)

³You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you].

God's love cleanses us through His Word. Good works can't cleanse us. Our righteousness comes from receiving Jesus. His blood redeemed us from sin. The application of His Word empowers us to defeat the temptation of Satan.

Day 28

John 15:4-7 (*The Amplified Bible*)

⁴Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. ⁷If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

God's love in us has to be so strong that we desire to do nothing without Jesus. In fact our prayer needs to be simple: "We seek to do and be only what God desires us to do and be, through Christ Jesus." We abide in Jesus by staying in His Word: reading it; studying it; and speaking or confessing it. By doing this, His Word will abide (and produce results) in us and through us.

Day 29

Luke 6:35 (*The Amplified Bible*)

³⁵But love your enemies and be kind and do good [doing favors so that someone derives benefit from them] ... then your recompense (your reward) will be great (rich, strong, intense, and abundant), and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind and charitable and good to the ungrateful and the selfish and wicked.

God's love instructs us to love our enemies and to do good to those that persecute us. If we do this, then He promises that our reward will be great!

Day 30

Ephesians 3:16-18 *(The Amplified Bible)*

¹⁶*May God grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].*

¹⁷*May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,*

¹⁸*That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it];*

God's love strengthens us with mighty power. It produces the power that we need to be strong. God will fill us with an abundant supply of His love, so that we might release it to others (even those who hurt us).

Day 31

Ephesians 3:19 *(The Amplified Bible)*

¹⁹*[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!*

God's love in us and for us is beyond our knowledge and our thinking. His love is all consuming. Like a fire, He seeks to devour us with His love by "burning up" everything within us that is not of Him!

Day 32

Ephesians 3:20 (*The Amplified Bible*)

²⁰Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams].

With the *power of love* at work within us, we are able to carry out God's purpose in our lives. By yielding to His love, and loving Him by obeying Him, we will achieve results more than anything that we could ever imagine or pray for!