

12 Foundation Stones—Class 5B

Love Is the Answer

The Golden Rule, Part 2

Section 1: Bible Study on the Law of Love

There is a lot in the Bible about human relationships and having love toward others. That's the whole purpose for living, to love God and others—the whole purpose for everything is love. And if you love God you'll love others too, because loving others is one way you show love for the Lord.

➤ **The Good Samaritan**

Let's look at Luke chapter 10 and the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Luke 10:25–37—And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (26) He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (27) So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" (28) And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." (29) But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

(30) Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. (33) "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. (34) "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'

(36) "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" (37) And he said, "He who showed mercy on him" Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

What did Jesus say when He was asked, "But who is my neighbor?" You talk about legalists; they want to know exactly, technically, 'Who's my neighbor'? In other words, "Tell me exactly who I have to love, so I know who I don't have to love."

That's when He gave the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus told them the story of a Samaritan who helped a poor beaten-up Jew who had been robbed. He picked him up and bound his wounds and took him to a hotel and paid his bill.

The Samaritans were a people whom the Jews hated and despised. If they even touched a Samaritan they'd have to wash afterwards! They would avoid traveling through Samaria. Rather than taking the shortest route to Galilee that went through Samaria, they would go clear across the Jordan River and around it just to keep from going near the Samaritans!

Jesus said this was a good neighbor, a Samaritan who was good to a Jew, how about that? In other words, He was as good as telling the Jews, "Listen, you know who your neighbors are. Those Samaritans up there in Samaria, the ones you hate and you won't even touch and you won't even go near and have nothing to do with, they're your neighbors. You'd better get busy and love them!"

Your neighbor is anybody that needs your love—anybody—even if he lives halfway around the world. He may not live next door, but if he lives on this earth he's your neighbor, so you're responsible for him. And we're certainly responsible for those who are right around you, that's for sure!

➤ **The supernatural love of God empowers you to love people you don't even like!**

Luke 6:32–36—But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. (35) But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing

in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. (36) Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

How can you love someone you don't like?—And does the Lord even expect you to do this? One notable aspect of the story of the Good Samaritan is how the Samaritan went out of his way to help someone who was more or less of an enemy nationality.

The answer is that empowered by the supernatural love of God, you can love anyone, even those you don't like, even someone who has done you wrong or harmed you in some way. Ask Jesus for His love.—He will respond to your fervent request. (We'll talk more about the "strength to love" later in this class.)

➤ **The greatest commandment: to love!**

Let's turn to Matthew 22. The religious leaders questioned Jesus:

Matthew 22:36—Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

Of the hundreds of commandments in the Mosaic law, this is what Jesus picked:

Matthew 22:37–39—Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus proceeded to shock these Pharisees—whose entire religion was built on their attempts to keep the hundreds of laws, ordinances, and traditions of their Jewish religion—by telling them that these two simple commandments summed up all the other commandments of the entire Old Testament!—That love was God's law!—That if you love, you are fulfilling all the laws of God! He proclaimed,

Matthew 22:40—On these two commandments [to love God and your neighbor] hang all the Law and the Prophets.

We call this the "Law of Love." The Law of Love is the Godly principle by which our entire lives, as Christians, should be governed. Jesus summed it up very simply in the famous "Golden Rule," giving us the key to our relationships with others.

■ **Review of Matthew 7:12**

Matthew 7:12—Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

This means that loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills God's laws. This loving principle should guide all of our actions with others. (This is a belief that binds millions of Christians together.)

➤ **Living the Law of Love is simply living what Jesus said is the law, the great commandment—to love.**

Galatians 5:14—For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This Law of Love that Jesus proclaimed—loving God first, and loving others as yourself—fulfills all the other Biblical law. It means that we are free from all the old Biblical law. For example, if you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind, then you won't put other gods before Him or take His Name in vain. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you won't kill him, steal from him, lie to him, or covet what he has. And the reason you won't do these things is because of love. You don't need the Biblical law to keep you from doing these things; you simply refrain from doing them because to do them would be unloving. This freedom from the Biblical law, based on the Lord's instruction to govern ourselves by loving God above all and our neighbors as ourselves, is the whole concept of the Law of Love in a nutshell.

➤ **Putting love into action**

When we talk about living the Law of Love, we're talking about loving those around you, about putting that love into tangible, everyday action. It's about sacrificial living, giving of yourself to others, helping those in need, and bearing one another's burdens.

The Law of Love is simply loving others unselfishly. In this unselfishness and in this life of sacrificial giving and loving, you not only allow yourselves to help many others, but you allow the Lord to pour out His blessings upon you. For He blesses the unselfish and the sacrificial.

God's Law of Love is first of all that you love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind, and second that you love your neighbor as yourself. The greatest way His love is manifested is in the laying down of your life for another.

➤ **The Law of Love should be the guiding principle of our lives.**

It's what everything we do should be based on. It includes so much: encouragement, comfort, simplicity, preferring one another, doing a little extra for those around you, sympathy, compassion, and feeling the pain that others suffer.

■ **Love on a day-to-day level**

1 Peter 4:8a—And above all things have fervent love for one another.

John 15:12—Love one another.

In Jesus' last message to His disciples at the Last Supper, before he was arrested, taken to jail, beaten, and then killed, what did He tell them? He talked about love, that love was the most important thing!

(You can read about this in John 13:1–17.)

What is the greatest commandment?—To love God. What's the next greatest? To love your neighbor as yourself! He said that's like unto the first commandment. To love your neighbor is to love God!

As you can see, the Lord is clearly trying to make the point that we should walk in love in all that we do, that love should be the main motivating factor in our every action, and that our love should be manifested in tangible, loving deeds which help to supply the needs of others.

➤ **When we see someone with a need, it is our duty, in love, to help supply that need.**

If we don't help, how can God's love dwell in us?

1 John 3:17–18—But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

When you help a child, or an overworked, sick, lonely or needy person, you are giving yourself to them in love; you are fulfilling Jesus' Law of Love. If you were sick or hungry, if you needed help with your children, if you needed some friendship, if you needed a coat or a pair of shoes or something to eat, wouldn't you want someone to give you the help you needed? (Matthew 7:12).

The essence of the Law of Love is having enough love to do to others what you would want them to do to you; to have enough love to help those in need, whatever the need, just as you would want them to help you in your need; to put the needs of others above your own, even when it's a sacrifice for you to do so. That's love.

➤ **Try to remember this important principle of the Law of Love as you go about your day.**

If you see someone who needs help, pitch in to help for a few minutes. That's love. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you'll put yourself in his place, and wonder how you would feel if you were there, and wonder what you would want and need to have fulfilled. This is what the Law of Love is all about—giving love, in deed and in truth, to those in need.

Giving love to others isn't always a matter of going out of your way to do some outstanding action like feeding the homeless, but it also means being a sharing person with those around you. Being generous and being giving needs to be a part of our everyday lives.

➤ **Love in action**

If we have real love, we won't face a needy situation without doing something about it. We won't just pass by the poor man on the road to Jericho! We will take action like the Samaritan did.

Many people today, when faced with suffering of the needy or the poor, say, "Oh, I'm so sorry, how sad!" But compassion must be put into action! That's the difference between pity and compassion: Pity just feels sorry; compassion does something about it!

Love can seldom be proven without tangible manifestation in action. The need for real love is a spiritual need, but it must be manifested physically in works.

Galatians 5:6—Faith working through love.

James 2:18—But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

In other words, if in the faith of God you really love people, they cannot understand it or believe it unless you really show them by some visible, tangible work or action that puts your words into action and puts your faith into effect and makes it fact and not fiction, a sample not just a sermon!

➤ **Compassion is loving deeds, not only loving words**

James 2:15–17—If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, (16) and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? (17) Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

What is compassion?—It is loving to the point of really helping. To be compassionate means to really care and truly be concerned, not to just say, "I love you" and then walk off and forget it. It's not saying, "Be warmed and filled," but not giving them what they need (James 2:16). But the compassionate are those who try to put feet to their prayers and kind deeds to their kind words and try to do good as well as speak good.

➤ **Our responsibility to give to others**

There are many Scriptures that make it clear that we have a responsibility to help the needy in practical ways.

Psalm 41:1a—Blessed is he who considers the poor.

In this next example we see that if we have something our neighbor needs, we owe it to him.

Proverbs 3:27–28—Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.

To love and share

A little orphan newsboy was selling his papers on the street. A man stopped to buy a paper from him. While the man was searching his pocket for a coin, he questioned the newsboy as to where he lived. The answer was that he lived in a little cabin way down in the dark district of the city, on the river bank. The next question was, "Who lives with you?"

The answer was, "Only Jim. Jim is crippled and can't do any work. He's my pal."

The man ventured the remark, "You'd be better off without Jim, wouldn't you?"

The answer came with some scorn. "No, Sir, I couldn't spare Jim. I wouldn't have anybody to go home to. And Mister, I wouldn't want to live and work with nobody to divide with, would you?"

➤ **Helping the needy is giving to the Lord.**

Proverbs 19:17—He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.

Matthew 25:31–40—When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (33) And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; (36) 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' (37) Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? (38) 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? (39) 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' (40) And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

➤ **We should support each other in our work for the Lord**

Our responsibility to help also extends to one another. We have each been blessed with many gifts that we are responsible to use for the good of others. If God has given us the ability to teach His Word, He expects us to use that ability. If He has given some of us money or other material possessions, He expects us to use them to help others—not only the "strangers on the street," but also our fellow-believers.

Romans 12:13—Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Here are examples of unity and helpfulness in action during the days of the Early Church:

Acts 11:27–30—And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. (28) Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. (29) Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. (30) This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Romans 15:26—For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

➤ **One particular aspect of our responsibility to each other is regarding helping those who are ministering the Gospel.**

The Apostle Paul wrote to a group of believers whom he had personally led to the Lord:

1 Corinthians 9:11 and 14—If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? (14) Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

Romans 15:27b—For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

➤ **God blesses us for giving to His work and to His workers!**

Hebrews 6:10—For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Matthew 10:42—And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.

God blesses us when we give!

From John and Susan, missionaries in South America

When we arrived here in this small city that the Lord had showed us to come to, there was another missionary family here with six children who were on their way south. They were waiting for money that was being sent from the States.

Time dragged on and their money hadn't come, so we prayed and then offered to help them. They said they needed \$200, which was about one third of our available funds. But when we prayed, we got the Scriptures Acts 2:44–45 and Luke 6:38, so we brought them the money.

The next day in the post we got a check for \$4,000—an inheritance that we had not known about. The check had been lost in the mail a year before, and the bank had discovered that it had not been cashed. What a fulfillment of God's promises and a real blessing for us to help us as we get established in South America!

What happened to the widow who supported God's worker?

This incident is described in 1 Kings 17:9–16. The land of Israel was suffering from a drought around 900 B.C. During the resultant famine, God's prophet Elijah was told by the Lord to visit the town of Zarephath, "See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you" (verse 9).

We can picture Elijah traveling through the dry land, arriving at Zarephath weary, hot and caked in dust. As he approached the city gate he spotted a woman gathering sticks. "Water!" he cried out to her, "please bring me some water in a cup that I may drink!" Taking pity on the weary stranger, the woman rose to bring him some water when he called out to her again, "And please, could you bring me something to eat also!" Turning to him, she exclaimed,

(verse 12:) "As the Lord lives, I don't even have a piece of bread, but only a handful of flour in a jar and a few drops of oil in a jug.—Look, I'm out here gathering a few twigs to cook with, to take home and make a final meal for myself and my son, that we may eat, and then die."

Elijah must have then realized that this poor little impoverished woman was the widow that the Lord had promised would feed and care for him! He then told her,

(verse 13–14:) "Fear not, but go and do as you said.—But make me a small cake of bread first, and then make something for yourself and your son! For thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Your jar of flour will not be used up, nor shall your jug of oil run dry, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon this land!'"

She may have thought to herself, "I told him how poor I am, how I'm gathering twigs to cook a final tiny meal for my son and myself, and that afterwards we expect to starve to death.—Yet he is asking me to make a little loaf of bread for him first!" But because Elijah spoke to her with such authority in the name of the Lord, she knew that he must be a man of God, a prophet, and she decided to trust God and do as Elijah instructed her. She hurried home and scraped together the last tiny handful of flour from the bottom of the large clay jar that it was kept in. She took her oil jug, tipped it, and drained out the last few drops of precious oil.

It was probably after she had mixed the flour and oil together into a paste and baked the little piece of bread for Elijah, that she received the surprise of her life: Picture this lowly widow, tidying things up while the bread-cake for Elijah was cooking. She goes to put the empty oil jug in its proper place, and suddenly she notices it's much heavier than it was a moment ago. Barely tipping it, she can hardly believe her eyes when fresh oil flows out of it!—It is full!

Setting it down, she rushes over to the large earthen pot where the flour is kept, and gasps aloud in astonishment when she lifts its lid!—Instead of the empty, dusty jar she knows it was just a few minutes earlier, it is now filled to the brim with fresh flour!—A miracle has taken place! Her heart overflows with thankfulness to the Lord for such a wonderful manifestation of His blessing! As a result of her care for God's worker, and just as Elijah had prophesied, in the midst of three long years of famine, "Her jar of flour was not used up, and her jug of oil did not run dry throughout the entire duration of the famine!" (verses 15–16)

Tithing—One way of giving to the Lord

Tithing—giving a tenth of one's income or property as an offering to God.

Many believers practice tithing—regularly giving one tenth of their income to the Lord's work. The dedication of a tenth to God was recognized as a duty before the time of Moses. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:6). Jacob vowed unto the Lord and promised a tenth to Him:

Genesis 28:22b—Of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.

Nowhere does the New Testament expressly command Christians to tithe. Nevertheless, the principle of giving remains and is incorporated in the Gospels. Ten percent is an easy figure to calculate and budget. However, the tithe is a guideline and shouldn't be a cap on a Christian's giving.

Luke 6:38—Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

God's blessings are promised to those who tithe:

Malachi 3:10—"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

➤ **Whether or not you have something material to share, you can still help others**

We consider that the sharing of our time, our love, and our life with others, is the greatest of all sharing. Jesus Himself did not usually have anything material to share with His disciples, only His love and His life, which He gave for them and for us, that we too might have life and love forever.

1 John 3:16—By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

John 15:13—Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

James 1:27—Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble.

Giving of yourself

A story is told about two brothers, soldiers in the trenches during World War 1. One was lying wounded in action in no-man's land, a deadly, dangerous area between the opposing forces. When the older brother in the trench heard of the plight of his brother in the field, he said to his officer, "I've got to go get him!"

His officer said, "It's impossible! You'll be killed the minute you stick your head out of this trench. You know the enemy always starts shooting the minute you go over the top!" But the older brother tore himself loose from the officer's grip, scrambled out of the trench, and plunged into no-man's land to find his kid brother, despite the withering fire of the enemy.

There he found him, mortally wounded, and whispering, "I knew you'd come! I knew you'd come!" The older brother, himself now wounded, barely managed to drag his younger brother back to the Allied lines, both of them falling into the trench dying.

With tears streaming down his face, his officer said to the older brother, "Why did you do it? I told you, you'd both be killed!"

But the older brother replied with a final smile, "I had to do it! You see—he expected it of me, and I couldn't fail him!"

The highland boy who averted a disaster at the cost of his life.

In the north of Scotland, the main railway line crosses a gully which is bridged by a viaduct. One night a fearful storm raged, and the little creek under the viaduct became a raging torrent.

A young shepherd, a Highland boy, sheltered his sheep as best he could for the night, and in the morning, long before dawn, he set out to see how they fared. As he made his way up the hillside he noticed, to his dismay, that the central column of the viaduct was gone, and the bridge was broken. He knew the train was due and, if not warned, would be dashed to pieces and many lives lost. He made his way up as best he could, wondering if he would be in time. As soon as he reached the rails he heard the pound of the mighty engine. He stood and beckoned wildly, but the engine driver, making up time, drove on. The train drew nearer, and still he stood, beckoning it to stop. At last it came to where he stood, and he flung himself in front of the engine.

The driver applied the brakes and managed to stop the train in its own length. The stop was sudden and the passengers, awakened, came to see what was the matter. The driver said, "It has been a close shave this time. We might all have been lost. Come and I'll show you the one who saved us tonight."

A little way along they saw the mangled remains of the shepherd boy who gave his life for them, dying that they might live (1Thessalonians 5:10; Titus 2:13–14).

➤ **The best gift of love is Jesus!**

People are looking around for some little ray of hope, some salvation, some kind of bright spot somewhere—a little love, a little mercy, someplace where they can find some relief.

The greatest joy they could find is coming to know Jesus! And therefore the greatest gift of love you can give to someone is leading them to the Lord—through your words, your sample, through giving out literature. Even if you don't feel capable yet of explaining to others about the Lord, you could at least give them tracts.

We're going to talk more about witnessing and how to lead people to the Lord in a later class.

Testimony: The poster that saved a life

From Esther, James, and Nathan, USA

"One of your posters saved my life," Jack told us. "Someone handed it to me in a parking lot. When I got home, I left it in the bathroom and forgot about it.

"Later that evening, I was feeling so hopeless and defeated that I took out my gun and went into the bathroom to end my life. I put the gun to my stomach and started to say one last prayer. 'Oh God...'

"Just as the words left my mouth, my eyes fell on the poster. The title was 'Peace in the Midst of Storm.' I read the text on the back, and cried myself to sleep that night."

Three days later Jack met The Family again. This time he stopped to talk and got saved. No longer "hopeless and defeated," Jack has become one of our closest friends and a big help to our work. God bless him!

Testimony: On call!

From Vicky, Italy

The phone rang, and I picked it up. "Hi, I love you!" a man's voice at the other end of the line said in a very sweet way. I tried to place the voice or think who might be phoning me with such a message, but quickly realized it was a wrong number.

I wanted to take the opportunity to tell whoever it was about the Lord, so I answered, "Thank you. I love you, too. And do you know what? Jesus loves you even more!"

Needless to say, the person on the other end was surprised at my answer. Now it was his turn to try to find out who I was! His questions gave me a chance to explain how I had met Jesus and dedicated my life to Him, and also a little about The Family's work here.

Before long, my anonymous caller was telling me all about himself. He had been an alcoholic until five months earlier, when he saw that his drinking problem was about to destroy him and he managed to quit. Still, he felt empty inside, he said.

At that point in the conversation, he explained that he was calling long distance and his phone card was about to run out. "Quick, give me your phone number, please, so I can call you back. I would love to stay in touch with you."

That day he went through four phone cards, talking with me. The next day he went through two more, and so on. He had so many questions about life and the times we live in! All those calls were getting quite expensive, of course, so finally he decided that it would be better if we discussed those things by mail.

Nothing ever happens by accident, and I'm sure Jesus wanted this dear man to know that he was loved in a special way—which surely he must be, to have been led to get to know Jesus through such unexpected and unorthodox means. I sure am glad I didn't lightly dismiss that first call as a wrong number and hang up. It was a good reminder that we need to be "on call" for Him and others at all times!

➤ **Followers of the Man of Love should also be loving!**

Jesus was the Man of Love who went about everywhere doing good, loving and caring for those He met. How can we prove that we are His followers?—By following in His steps and being loving. This loving does not only extend outwards to those who cross our path. It also includes unity amongst ourselves, the body of believers.

John 13:35—By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Always be tender, loving, and kind and "love one another" as He said:

Ephesians 4:32—And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

What everybody needs is love! If they're not going to find it here, amongst the followers of the God of love, where are they going to find it?

Loving Hands

The Rev. Ira Gillett, missionary in the former Portuguese East Africa, tells the story of a group of natives who had made a long journey and walked past a government hospital to come to the mission hospital for treatment. When asked why they had walked the extra distance to reach the mission hospital when the same medicines were available at the government institution, they replied, "The medicines may be the same, but the hands are different!"

➤ **The Love Chapter**

Love is a constant Theme of the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 13 is the "Love chapter" and gives us much practical advice about how to live according to the Law of Love. (Read it after the class!)

Section 2: Strength to Love

➤ **If you give in love, you will be rewarded: The "Boomerang" Principle**

Galatians 6:7—Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

It's just one of God's rules and laws of the Spirit—just as definite and certain as some of the scientific laws of gravity. The laws of the Spirit, however, never fail! They always work—either for you or against you, according to how you obey them and whether or not you obey them. The first law is the Law of Love—unselfish love—love for Him and others. If you will obey that one and give that love which is His and their due, so shall you also receive.

Matthew 7:2—With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Ecclesiastes 11:1—Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

Testimony: Overflowing with blessings

From Michael, Latvia

One morning while praying about what to do that day, Sara saw a vision of one drop of water falling into a cup, which caused the cup to overflow. She had the impression that the drop of water symbolized our helping the poor: It often seems too little to do much good, but because we try to do what we can, the Lord causes our cup to overflow with blessings.

So Sara decided to bring some bread and flour to Nina, a friend at the local market, who scrapes together a living for herself and her children selling little trinkets and forest berries.

Nina wasn't at the market that day, but another woman said, "Oh, you have bread and flour? Why don't you give it to me? I'm also poor!" But when Sara handed the food to her, the woman changed her mind. "Actually, my sister needs it more than I do. Why don't we give it to her instead?"

Just then her sister arrived on the scene. When Sara and the other woman offered her the bread, her eyes widened in amazement. She raised her arms heavenward and said, "God sent you! This morning I prayed that He would give me bread. My children and I had nothing to eat, and God sent you with this bread!"

The next time we visited a baker who supports us and our work by donating bread each week, he gave us much more than we could possibly eat ourselves—more to pass on to others who are hungry and needy! As soon as we did our part to fulfill that little vision the Lord gave Sara, He did His part and poured out abundant blessings on us!

➤ **Whether you see the results or not...**

Whether those you help show their appreciation or not, or whether you see results right away or not, you should not let this discourage you. What's most important is that you are doing your part to fulfill the Lord's Law of Love. Trust Him for the results!

Blossoming flowers

A young woman who was a great lover of flowers had set out a rare vine at the base of a stone wall. It grew vigorously but it did not blossom. Day after day she cultivated it and watered it and tried in every way to coax it into bloom.

One morning as she stood disappointed before it, her invalid neighbor, whose back lot adjoined her own, called over and said, "You cannot imagine how much I have been enjoying the blooms of that vine you planted." The owner looked and on the other side of the wall was a mass of bloom. The vine had crept through the crevices and flowered luxuriantly on the other side.

There is a lesson for every Christian here. So often we think our efforts thrown away because we do not see their fruit. We need to learn that in God's service our prayers, our toil, our crosses are never in vain. Somewhere they bear their fruit and some heart will receive their blessing and their joy.

If you feel your efforts don't count for much, know this—you can make a difference!

I was walking down a deserted beach at sunset. As I ambled along, I noticed a local man in the distance. Coming closer, I saw that he kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things into the ocean.

As I approached even closer, I saw that the man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at a time, he was throwing them back into the water.

I was puzzled. I approached the man and said, "Good evening, friend. I was wondering what you are doing."

"I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it's low tide right now and all of these

starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the sea, they'll die."

"I understand," I replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach! You can't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And don't you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down the coast. Can't you see that you can't possibly make a difference?"

The man smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, "Made a difference to that one!"

➤ **Living the Law of Love requires the love of God!**

It's no easy task to live Jesus' commandments of love. To love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, to love others as ourselves, and to lay down our lives for the brethren, all require living a life of self-sacrifice. It means putting Jesus first, others next, and ourselves last. Doing so goes against the natural man, against human nature. To have this kind of love, the love that causes you to lay down your life for your brethren, living for others, requires the supernatural love of God. That's why Jesus says,

John 15:5—Without Me you can do nothing.

We know that:

Philippians 4:13—I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

2 Corinthians 12:9—And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

You can't possibly keep His Law of Love unless you have Jesus in your heart and the Spirit of God's love within you, to give you the power and the strength to love others more than you love yourself.

Living the Law of Love means consistently, sacrificially thinking of others and serving them. That's a tall order! It's so easy to be lazy, selfish, and self-centered; most of us are that way naturally. Our first reactions are usually about ourselves, what we want, what will make us happy. But if we ask the Lord to help us and we put forth a genuine effort, we can develop new habits and reactions, which, with time, will help us to become more loving, caring, sacrificial individuals.

The Lord understands that we don't naturally have enough love to live in the loving manner that He's asking us to. But just because we can't do it doesn't mean He doesn't expect us to, because He will do it for us and through us! He's promised that He can give us the love we need, that He will pour His love through us and make us new creatures!

➤ **Getting filled up with His love!**

If you call out to the Lord, simply asking Him for the love you need, and are then willing to put that love into action by faith, He will give you His love in such tremendous volume and power that you will know you have witnessed a miracle!

It takes fervent prayer, a believing spirit, and a willing mind and heart. Then follow this with many small steps of unselfish love, and you will become a new creature. You will think of others, have more concern, and feel for others' needs more readily. You'll be willing to give up your own plans and ideas to care for the weak.

Love is action, love is doing, love is outgoing concern. But all of this must come from the Lord's hand if it is to last. He has such love for us!

He is the God of miracles, and He will give us this miracle of love. He is love, and we can have more of Him than we've ever had before.

Matthew 7:7—Ask, and it will be given to you.

The Lord will give you the strength, the grace, and the power to give of yourself to others, to put the needs of others before your own, if you ask Him, if you let Him fill you with His Spirit, if you give your life to Him. You can't do it, but Jesus can! And He will, if you let Him!