

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

# Walking in Love

Series:  
Walking in  
Newness of Life

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – Sep/2023 – English Translation – Sep/2023  
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The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

*Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

*Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.*

*Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

*Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*

*2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.*

*3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."  
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,  
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

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## **C1. Walking in Conformity with the Condition that Generated Newness of Life for a Christian**

The theme Walking in Love is a continuation of the Walking in Newness of Life series and is preceded by a sequence of subjects in which various aspects are addressed that are related to the proper support for a Christian to be able to walk effectively in the new life that is granted to him or her as a new creature in Christ Jesus, just as in them were also addressed several practical aspects to which a Christian is called to pay attention in terms of walking in the Lord.

And although the themes mentioned in the previous paragraph already contain a large number of aspects that exemplify and demonstrate that Christians, as a result of living in fellowship with Christ, are also called to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus in the most diverse aspects of their lives in the present world, we understand that the specific point about Christians being called to “walk in love” reiterates the vocation of God for them mentioned above still in another particular or very peculiar way.

**God's calling for every Christian to “walk in love,” in turn, is also worthy of special mention, among many other aspects, because just as God's truth, righteousness, and grace permeate all aspects of God's will and actions, even being inseparable aspects of the generation of a person as a new creature in Christ Jesus, so it also is with God's love. And this is so because love is also inseparable from the Lord, His will, His actions, the constitution of a person as a Christian, and God's calling for each Christian.**

**God's calling for Christians to “walk in love,” as well as to walk in God's truth, grace, and righteousness, is a calling for them to walk in conformity with the attributes of God by which they could receive the condition of saved, redeemed, or new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a calling for the children of God to walk according to the attributes of God that originated their condition as Christians or belonging to the Heavenly Father's family, as exemplified in the texts below:**

*1 John 3: 1 **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.***

*Ephesians 5: 1 **Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.**  
2 **And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.***

*1 John 4: 7 **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**  
8 **He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.***

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In still other words, a Christian is called to “walk in love” because one was begotten or made alive in Christ through the love itself precisely to also live and walk in love.

Given this, **the fact that God highlights that Christians were begotten by love to “walk in love” is of vital importance, for in this way, He instructs Christians that they, from the moment of their conception as new creatures, already have in their hearts the requirements for also to be able to “walk in love.” And for this, they no longer need to be subject to a life contrary to love and in which they were imprisoned before knowing Christ Jesus as the Lord of their lives.**

If, on the one hand, God's calling for a Christian to “walk in love” is related to the benefits that this brings to the person who walks in love and to the purpose for which a person is redeemed in the Lord, on the other hand, knowing that a Christian is called to “walk in love” because one is the fruit of it also comes to clarify what is given to an individual in the Lord from the beginning of one's Christian life so that one can also be amply supported to advance in what one is called to walk.

By evidencing that a Christian, already in one's new birth, was begotten by the righteousness of God and in conformity with the heavenly love, God also shows that He does not require a Christian to accomplish something for which this Christian was not begotten. That is, God only calls Christians for them to walk in what is part of the characteristic of the new creature that they became in Christ Jesus.

God does not call a Christian to walk in the light without first offering him or her the light and the condition to walk in the light. A principle that similarly also applies to the calling to “walk in love.”

Therefore, **God calls His children to walk in the light because they were begotten of light or made children of light before they can walk in the light, just as God also calls His children to “walk in love” because they have already been begotten according to the heavenly truth, righteousness, and love.**

**Just as God works according to righteousness, truth, and love in everything because these characteristics are inherent to His “Being,” so also the Lord first grants the attributes of righteousness, truth, and love to Christians so that they too may live and walk in the condition of these new attributes that they received from God by receiving Christ Jesus as Lord.**

## C2. God's Love, Manifested Love, Received Love, and Walking in Love

Among the various aspects to which God calls Christians to walk in newness of life, walking in love or walking in God's love is perhaps one of the most challenging to understand and consider appropriately. And this, in part, is due to the great challenge of finding a more summarized and adequate conceptualization of what “love” is and the fact that many people adopt their own understanding of what they think “love” is.

**As with the grace of God, one of the aspects that makes understanding love challenging is that it is an attribute that is part of God or a person who has it in one's life, but which cannot be seen merely with the natural eyes unless it manifests itself in some form or by some action, which, in turn, leads us to the need to distinguish between love itself and its practical manifestation.**

Therefore, for an individual to be able to manifest oneself in love, practice love, or act in love, it is necessary that one has love as an attribute because for an act to be an act of love, it needs to have been performed from the beginning in love.

As an attribute of God or an individual, love needs to be part of a person's life even before one acts in love, for in this sense of being an attribute, love is a virtue of an individual that enables him or her to take the initiative and the practice of doing acts in love or acts out of love.

**In this way, love as an attribute of God or an individual is a virtue that enables God or a person to be motivated in the sense of being especially attentive to the lives of other individuals or what they love, as well as to perform acts in favor of other individuals or something that is loved. That is, love is the generating source of acts or manifestations of love.**

In addition, **another essential aspect to be observed in the Scriptures about the “love of God” is the fact that it, as an attribute or virtue of the glory of the Lord, can still be shared with other individuals, in the sense that those who receive it will also be able to have it as a virtue in their lives so that they can also use it according to the characteristics of the love they received.**

Thus, according to the considerations mentioned above, we can see in the Scriptures that the theme of love needs to be seen at least from the perspective of the following aspects:

- ⇒ 1) **Love as an attribute of God;**
- ⇒ 2) **The love of God manifested to the world;**
- ⇒ 3) **Love as an attribute or virtue received by an individual;**
- ⇒ 4) **Walking in love or practicing the love received.**

So, in the first point about love mentioned above, the Scriptures teach us that the love of God is an integral part of the “Being” of the Lord and that God is the unique eternal source of this same love.

God and His love are inseparable, a point highlighted in the Scriptures when they declare that **God is love** and that everything God does is done according to His love or permeated with His love.

*1 John 4: 8 **He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.***

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

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As for the second point about love mentioned above, and considering that God's love also leads to practical actions moved by love, we can observe in the Scriptures how God has explicitly expressed or manifested His love to the world and to those who believe in His Gospel, the Gospel that in all its attributes is also presented to the world as the Gospel or the Good News of God's love for every human being.

Let us see below, then, some texts that clearly exemplify that the love of God has already been expressed toward the world and those who believe in the offer of the newness of life offered to them by the Lord:

*John 3: 16 **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

*17 **For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

*18 **He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."***

*Romans 5: 8 **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

*1 John 4: 9 **In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.***

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

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From the first moment that Adam and Eve chose disobedience or sin instead of following God's instruction and love, the Lord already signaled to them that He would grant them a descendant who would come to make propitiation for their sins so that they could believe in redemption by grace through faith, which, in turn, was all provided perfectly because of God's love for every human being.



Thus, in this second aspect of God's love, we can see that the Lord provided everything that was necessary and provides everything that is necessary so that a person can return to fellowship with Him and so that one can receive the condition of eternal life in the Lord or the newness of life that God wants everyone to know and receive.

Advancing here to the third point about love mentioned earlier, we can note that the Scriptures teach us that **in addition to God having already manifested Himself amply in love by making a perfect provision that enables human beings to reconcile with Him and come to have fellowship with Him, the Lord also longs for people to believe in the provision made by Him so that they too can receive His love and be bearers of this love.**

In this way, **we can see that in addition to the love of God being a practical love that has already manifested itself in providing the way of remission of a person from subjection to sin and the condemning Law of Moses, and providing the way of reconciliation of fellowship with the Lord and eternal life, the love of God is also manifested as a love that gives itself to be poured out in the heart of the one who believes in Christ Jesus. And this, so that the one who receives this love is also abundantly supplied to be able to practice it similarly.**

Let us see below a text that teaches us how the Lord works to also grant His love to those who believe in Him:

*Romans 5: 1* **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

...

**5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

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Given this, without distinguishing the diversity of aspects related to love and that precede walking in love or practicing love, which is the fourth point about love mentioned above, a person may aspire to practice love but face great difficulties or even impossibilities to carry it out.

In other words, **when God calls people to walk in love, by love, or to practice love in their lives, He does not do it without first manifesting to them the love that He, God Himself, has already manifested to the world and without Him offering true love so that people can also practice it.**

**When God calls Christians to walk in love, it is necessary that the way or the condition for doing so is also provided for them beforehand.**

*1 Timothy 1: 14* **And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**

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Therefore, before focusing more specifically on “walking in love,” we will seek, in the following chapters, to detail some aspects that serve to support and guide a Christian's walking in this specific aspect of God's calling to those who believe in Him.

### C3. The Love Necessary for the Practice of Love

When the theme of love is approached, one of the interesting aspects to be observed about it is that in the original language in which the Scriptures were recorded, more specifically regarding the part that is commonly called the New Testament, there are different words used in their texts to referring to people's relationships with other individuals or aspects that they enjoy, but which are all translated into the same word “love” in several other languages.

While the texts recorded in the first centuries of Christian life contain different words for the love between friends, the love of money, the love between a couple, the brotherly love between fellow believers, and the love of God, in several contemporary languages everything is converged to the same word love, thus making it difficult, in a sense, to understand the love in which a Christian is called by God to walk or obscuring the understanding that there can be a big difference between the practice of love and the kind of love that someone uses in this practice.

In other words, **just as in many different aspects of life, there is also a distinction regarding love between the intent of practicing something and the content used to carry out a certain practice.**

Just for the purpose of an example, let us consider a thirsty person and a person who intends to give something to quench one' neighbor's thirst. A situation in which the act of giving something to a neighbor to try to quench one's thirst could be seen as the practice of the act or the practice of what, in this example, we consider equivalent to a supposed practice of help or love, while the type of liquid offered to the neighbor would be referring to the content that is extended to another person in the practice of the act of helping one's fellow man.

Nevertheless, continuing with the example in focus, if the person claiming to want to help one's neighbor extends to him or her a type of liquid that does not have the proper properties to quench the thirst, the person who is claiming to want to help another individual, despite having performed an act to try to help one's neighbor, did not actually help, for the content used was inappropriate. If the person in this example hands a glass of salted or contaminated water to a thirsty person, even if one does not know it, one will only aggravate one's neighbor's situation with this practice.

Thus, **combining the practice of an act with the content adopted in this practice is essential or crucial to the theme of love.**

A person, for instance, may brotherly love another person with a type of social love, where brotherly love is the action and social love is the content. However, with this combination, one does not carry out the instruction that God teaches in His written word about how one should practice love toward one's fellow people.

**The Word of God, in instructing Christians that they are called to walk in love, also instructs them with what “kind of love” they should practice walking in love, calling Christians to “practice” love also with the “content” that the Lord has instructed them to use.**

Therefore:

⇒ **To love according to God's will equals the practice of love + the kind of love suitable for practicing love.**

In the case of brotherly love, for example, the practice of this love, the act, needs to be carried out with the love, the content, that God grants to each Christian for him or her to love one's fellow believers of faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us see below a text that exemplifies the considerations of these last paragraphs:

*1 Thessalonians 4: 9* **But concerning brotherly love (philadelphia) you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love (agapao) one another; ...**

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“**Brotherly love,**” called “*philadelphia*” in ancient Greek, expresses the context and practice toward whom love should be practiced. Now, the expression “**for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another,**” in turn, makes use of another word for love, which is used to express the love that is in God and that comes from God, and which is called in the same ancient Greek as “*agapao*.”

So, the instruction of the Scriptures regarding “brotherly love” is that Christians should practice love towards their fellow believers or love one another with “the love that comes from God.”

Or yet, **the “practice of love” that a Christian is called by God to practice should always have the “love of God” as its substance or content.**

The practice of “brotherly love” may be carried out, for instance, with other contents such as the so-called love of friends or love coming from a person's soul (*philos*), the love of money (*philarguria*), the love of a physical attraction or a romantic love (*eros*). But none of these types come to represent the specific love with which God calls Christians to love one another.

A person full of the “love of money,” for example, may want to be fraternal and affectionate toward one's fellow men, but one always does so under the goal of supplying the demands of one's greed and avarice. This person can be kind to one's neighbor, include others in one's closest circle of relationships, and open one's house to receive one's fellow people, but one still does it out of self-interest and as long as this satisfies one's greed. In this practice, however, there is none of the love of God with which the Lord calls Christians to practice “brotherly love.” (An aspect also addressed in the themes Another Gospel or A Different Gospel and The Christian and the Riches.)

Still another way “brotherly love” may be practiced is based on the content of one's own soul that seeks to act out of sympathy or empathy towards others. This kind of love, however, also does not yet express the type of love with which God calls a Christian to practice “brotherly love,” for no person has in one's mere natural condition a love that is according to the standard of the love that comes from God or is given by the Lord to carry out the calling to walk in love.

Unlike in the situation of living and walking under the Law of Moses, under which people aspired to love God and their neighbor through the effort of the flesh or soul, Christians are called in Christ Jesus to love God and their fellow people with the same love that was in Christ Himself.

Living under the Law of Moses, human beings have never managed, in their efforts, to fulfill the commandment to love that the people chose in the desert after leaving

Egypt. However, from Christ, a new and superior commandment was introduced by the Lord to serve as a reference or basis for the practice of love.

*John 13: 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.  
35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

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**Christ loved His disciples with the love of the Heavenly Father that was in Him through the Holy Spirit.**

That is, the love of God, the proper content to carry out the practice of love appropriately, is granted by God to a person's heart when one receives the status of a new creature in Christ Jesus and is poured into a person's heart as the fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life.

**God's love, the content, cannot be generated by human effort, for it is the result or fruit of the very presence of God's Spirit in a person's heart.**

*Galatians 5: 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.***

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Thus, when the Scriptures teach that the fruit "of the Spirit" is love, it is because love is not the fruit of human effort, a person's soul, or a person's flesh, but it is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

*Romans 7: 18 **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.***

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**Given this, when God calls Christians to have love and practice love, Christians are not called to try to produce "heavenly love" on their own. Instead, they are called to welcome the Holy Spirit in their hearts so that the Spirit of the Lord will make God's love be present and manifested in their hearts.**

Many Christians, or those who call themselves Christians, have made enormous efforts to carry out the "practice of love." However, because they do not welcome or do not give space to the Holy Spirit's work in their lives, they simply do not open their hearts to be able to act with the love of God as the content or substance of their attempts to practice love.

Repeating once more: The "fruit of the Spirit" is love. So, love is not "the fruit of the human effort to love."

Therefore:

- ⇒ 1) To love God with the love of God, a person needs first to have received the love of God in one's life to be able to use it;
- ⇒ 2) To love one's spouse with the love of God, and not just with the natural love between a man and a woman, it is equally necessary for an individual to have first received God's love in one's life;
- ⇒ 3) To love children, parents, fellow believers, neighbors, and even enemies with the love of God, it is necessary for an individual first to have received the love of God in one's life.

**God Himself is the source of love for a Christian to have the love of God to be able to use it, practice it, or walk in it. For this reason, the Christian also needs to previously receive it from the Lord to act in line with God's calling for one's life.**

Recalling the third point mentioned in the previous chapter, we see that **the love of God is first shared with a person or even poured into a person's heart so that, having received heavenly love, one uses it to practice it.**

***Romans 5: 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

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Thus, **since the possibility of a Christian acting in the love of God results from one's attitude of receiving and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in one's life, it is crucial for a Christian not to find oneself in a condition of resistance to the Spirit of the Lord and His voice, as exemplified in the example below.**

***Acts 7: 51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."***

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Finally, if we seek to be even more precise in the approach mentioned at the beginning of this chapter about what it means to practice love according to God's will, we could then say that:

- ⇒ **Loving according to the will of God is expressed by the practice of love carried out with the love given by God and which is poured into the heart of the Christian by the Holy Spirit granted by the Lord to the Christian.**

In this way, **whether in action or speech, the practice of love that a Christian is called by God to perform or to walk in it should always be carried out with the love that comes from the Heavenly Father or the love that always was and is in Christ Jesus and that is given by the Holy Spirit to those who receive Christ as Lord in their hearts.**

**When a Christian unites one's yearning to practice love with the use of the love given by God to carry out this practice, one is broadly aligned with the Lord to walk in what one is called to walk in the Lord.**

*2 Timothy 1: 13 **Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.***

## C4. A More Excellent Way

In the theme Walking in Newness of Life, we present the chapter The Newness of Life and the Actions to be Practiced in the New Paths, which, in turn, aims to highlight that a person's life also develops from the ways one chooses to walk in and the actions one practices on these paths, adding to it several considerations about what characterizes a way and the actions to be practiced in it.

And without wanting to repeat what has already been exposed in the theme cited above, we would just like to mention that adopting a set of attitudes in life may also characterize the choice of a path to be followed by a person.

Starting, then, from these concepts referenced above and applying them to the subject of “walking in love,” we can notice that the Scriptures show us that if a person chooses to walk in the Lord, one can also choose to walk on the “path of love.”

For example, through Paul, called to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, God teaches us that concerning a person's life, among several possible paths to be adopted by an individual, there is a “more excellent or exceedingly excellent way” to be chosen or followed, as the text below shows us:

*1 Corinthians 12: 31* **But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.**

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Added to this, after referring to the “exceedingly excellent” way, Paul even describes the preeminent characteristic that makes up this sublime way, culminating with an instruction for Christians also to follow this essential aspect portrayed by him, as follows:

- 1 Corinthians 13: 1* **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**
- 2* **And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love**, I am nothing.**
- 3* **And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not love**, it profits me nothing.**
- 4* **Love** suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;
- 5* does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;
- 6* does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
- 7* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8* **Love** never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.
- 9* For we know in part and we prophesy in part.
- 10* But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
- 11* When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
- 12* For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.



***13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.***

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*1 Corinthians 14: 1(a) Pursue love, ...*

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**Many people who hear about “paths to be followed or traveled” probably think first of paths in their professions and professional careers. However, to follow life according to the course of God's love is also a choice of a path of how a person wants to live and walk in one's life.**

Some people decide to follow the path of their own thinking. Others choose to follow the thinking of philosophers. Still others follow the ways suggested by social leaders such as rulers, artists, actors, economists, writers, teachers, or even their so-called religious leaders.

**Nevertheless, all the proposed path options ultimately boil down to following the path offered by the Creator God of Heaven and Earth or following some path proposed by the creatures created by God.**

**In general, or ultimately, there are then only two existing path options, where the calling to “walk in love” or in the “exceedingly excellent way” refers to the same calling of God for Christians to follow Christ or walk in the truth and have Christ Jesus as the reference for the path of life both for the present and eternal life.**

Since antiquity, God has already announced to human beings the existence of the option for one or another path. And despite being presented with different names so that there is an understanding of their multiple attributes or characteristics, these paths always end up being reflected also in the aspect of representing the two options of living and walking that human beings have before them, as exemplified also in the text below from the prophet Jeremiah:

*Jeremiah 7: 23 "But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’*

*24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward."*

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**When God exposes the greatness and a series of characteristics of the “Exceedingly Excellent Way” and calls Christians to follow this path or follow love, He is not referring to a way distinct from the path of following the Lord Jesus Christ or the path of walking in Him. On the contrary, God is highlighting one more of the excellent aspects that exist in the unique way of His newness of life or that are inseparable from this path.**

**Just as God calls people to follow Christ Jesus because in Him they can have light in the world, and thus no longer need to walk in darkness, so it is also in the Lord Jesus Christ and in following Him that people can find the provision of love so that they too can walk in love or practice love properly.**

Since Christ is the “Way” and “no one can come to the Heavenly Father” except through Christ Jesus, and since the Heavenly Father is love, it is by following Christ that a person has access to the love that is so excellently described by Paul in his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, and by extension to all Christians.

**Thus, there is no way to dissociate the path of love, or following love, from walking according to the direction of God in Christ Jesus.**

Since love does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth, and since the Scriptures also inform us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the truth and the righteousness of God to everyone who believes in the Lord, only in Christ can a Christian walk in love.

**Christ, then, is the “Way” exalted also as “exceedingly excellent” because God's love is manifested and given to Christians essentially in Christ Jesus.**

**Or still, just as a human being can only walk in newness of life according to the heavenly kingdom if one walks in Christ Jesus, so likewise following love or walking in it is associated with following Christ or walking in the Lord Jesus.**

For this reason, as much as people try to practice by themselves the love that God calls them to practice, walking according to human beings is a path that will face frustration also in this attempt, for it is the path that follows the course that lacks heavenly light including the very realization that it is in His divine love that God calls people to walk and not just in the natural kinds of affection that people may come to have for one another.

We understand that it is also worth emphasizing here that the option for the “exceedingly excellent path” is not necessarily an easy option to make, for when someone chooses to lead one's life along a specific type of path, one will have in one's choice both what the chosen path offers as well as the restrictions that are pertinent to the way one has chosen to follow.

So, in the “exceedingly excellent way,” the “way of love,” or the “way of following Christ,” a person will not have at one's disposal all the things that, for example, are available on the path of selfishness. On the other hand, if a person chooses the path of selfishness, this path will also lack the characteristics exclusively granted in the “exceedingly excellent way.”

Therefore:

*Matthew 7: 13* ***“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*”**

*14* ***Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”***

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In the previous chapter, we already addressed the point that the practice of different types of love is recognized by God if the content of the practice carried out is also the love of God.

Thus, each type of path of life has its own characteristics as its content, which is essential to be well understood, for as we have already discussed, the practice of the different types of affection between people and between them and God is recognized by God if the content of the practice is also with the love of God. And when people do not distinguish the content of the various types of attitudes of the diverse things they call “love,” they begin to lean towards confusing and turbulent paths that, in the end, do not lead them to the desired newness of life.

**God's love has its own characteristics and cannot be defined or redefined by human beings. God's love is what it is and will never change, just as God's truth is what it is and can never be changed. For this reason, it is up to the Christian, together with the help of the Holy Spirit, to learn how the love that is already available in the Lord is and how it works.**

**The “Exceedingly Excellent Way” has this characteristic of excellence, which is attributed to it by God, precisely because it is already perfect, for although a Christian can come to be perfected in the way of following love or walking in Christ Jesus, Christ and the love of God are in all and eternally perfect.**

Therefore, to follow the path of God's love is to follow what God's love is, without trying to modify it and adjust it to the limited concepts and interests of human beings or without trying to accommodate it to the paths contrary to the characteristics of heavenly love and that so many people appreciate following.

The path of God's love is a path already defined by God and which the human being can choose to follow or choose to reject, but one cannot modify it nor fit it into the paths proposed by human beings themselves.

Similarly, also in the book of Psalms, we have several examples that show us that the best option for the one who believes in the Lord is not to try to change God's ways or try to bring the things of God to human ways. Instead, these examples show us that the proper choice is the one that chooses the path that is already true, righteous, perfect, exceedingly excellent, and in which there is an abundant supply of love.

*Psalms 25: 4 **Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.***

*Psalms 17: 5 **Uphold my steps in Your paths, That my footsteps may not slip.***

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**The way of God or walking according to the will of God is presented to us as the “exceedingly excellent way of love” to show even more the perfection that there is in the way also called as to live and walk in Christ Jesus and through which a person can also be able to come to know more and more the Heavenly Father.**

So, on the one hand, if a person knows more about God's way for one's life, one will know more about the Lord's love for him or her, which is also given to be practiced in one's life. On the other hand, if a person knows more about the attribute of God called love, one will also know more about the exceeding excellent characteristic and the perfection that there is in the whole way that God proposes to every Christian to live and walk in Christ Jesus.

The calling to follow God's love, together with the calling to follow Christ as the Way of Truth and Life, then exposes, in yet another way or perspective, how special God's calling is for every Christian. However, the lack of heavenly love and truth creates space for many distorted understandings about the true walking in the Lord, an aspect concerning which the Lord, since antiquity, contends with people who say they want to follow Him, but who abstain from that which cannot be dissociated from properly following the Lord.

*Hosea 4: 1 **Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy (or love or kindness) Or knowledge of God in the land."***

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Finally, in this chapter, aiming at reiterating once again how much Christ and the love of God are inseparably associated, we would also like to remind that in the same text in which Christ Jesus declares that without Him a Christian can do nothing, He also refers to a Christian likewise abiding in His love, as follows:

*John 15: 4 **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.***

*5 **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

*6 **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.***

*7 **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.***

*8 **By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.***

*9 **As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.***

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The exceedingly excellent way to have faith accompanied by love, to be able to practice brotherly love accompanied by heavenly love, or to be able to walk in love in everything is the same "exceedingly excellent way" of following and abiding in Christ Jesus and His love, considering yet that the Heavenly Father has already revealed to us that it is into the kingdom of the Son of His Love that a Christian is saved by heavenly grace.

Colossians 1: 13 ***He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,***  
14 ***in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.***

1 John 4: 9 ***In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.***

## C5. Cause and Effect Concerning Walking in Love

Another matter by which we can understand that the love of God is first granted to a Christian so that it can later be practiced or so that a Christian can walk in love is related to the description of the Scriptures about the order or sequence of acts that are associated with the practice of heavenly love, which is also explicitly described in the texts that follow below:

*1 John 4: 19* ***We love Him because He first loved us.***

*1 Corinthians 4: 7* ***For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?***

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As we saw earlier, a Christian can only walk in the exceedingly excellent way, which is to follow love or Christ Jesus, because this way already exists beforehand for it to be followed or for someone to walk in it. A Christian can only walk in a more excellent way if God makes it possible for him or her to walk in this way. And the Christian is only able to practice love because one was first loved and received love from God to also share or practice it towards God, oneself, and others.

**Thus, if we look at the theme of “walking in love” or practicing love from the perspective of “cause and effect,” as well as to the other aspects of the Christian life, the Lord explicitly shows us that “walking in love” is not “the cause or generator of love,” but it is the “love of God” that is “the cause or generator of walking in love or the practice of love.”**

We understand, then, that the point we want to highlight or reiterate once again in this chapter is vital for Christians, for the distortion of understanding or awareness of the order in which God's love works in Christians has generated many difficulties and frustrations for many lives.

**Perhaps because of the natural propensity of human beings to be inclined to want to obtain by their own effort what they want or perhaps because of the remnants of the mentality that God's favor must be obtained by works and conduct similar to those practiced under the condemnatory Law of Moses, it is impressive to observe how much the attempt to invert the “cause and effect,” also regarding the practice of love, seeks to rise so repeatedly and insistently among people and even among Christians themselves or those who call themselves Christians.**

Nevertheless, without wanting to go back to investigating the reasons why people try to invert “cause and effect” regarding the aspects in which they are called to walk in the Lord, and also because this point has already been addressed in the themes The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, Another Gospel or A Different Gospel, and The Christian and the Riches, we would like, at least, to discuss some considerations related to some texts particularly associated with love and because of which some unaware people, or even malicious people, are inclined to mistakenly think that the attainment of love is

the “effect” or result of a Christian's works and not that reaching love is an “effect” of God's action of granting it to the Christian's heart through heavenly grace.

Let us see below, then, some texts from which some people think that what “causes” the attainment of love is the practice of the commandments and not the heavenly grace of the Lord. And this is because they see these texts separately or dissociated, for example, from the verse mentioned above that declares that ***“we love Him because He first loved us.”***

*John 14: 21* ***“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”***

*John 15: 10* ***“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”***

*1 John 5: 3* ***For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.***

*4* ***For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.***

*2 John 1: 6* ***This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.***

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Under a quick or superficial reading of these last texts, a person, under a mentality in line with the Law of Moses or similar to it, may easily come to think that love is generated as a consequence of a person obeying or practicing the commandments that Christ or the Heavenly Father instructs a person to follow or practice. However, this thought or mentality does not find support from the general perspective of how the Christian is called to live and walk in the Christian life or in newness of life, which, in turn, is based on abiding in Christ so that a Christian, from remaining in Him, is made able by the Lord to proceed according to the will of God for one's life, remembering that the Scriptures assert that ***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*** (Romans 10: 4)

Therefore, once we understand that the commandments to which the Scriptures refer to in the last texts exposed above are related to the commandments of God and of Christ Jesus for the Christian's life and not to the commandments of the Law of Moses, which God has already revoked in Christ Jesus, it is also appropriate to emphasize again the commandment in which Christ calls Christians to remain in Him, for without this condition, “they can do nothing” that produces fruit according to the will of God.

For a Christian to be able, then, to keep the commandments of Christ, and not the commandments of the Law of Moses or similar to it, it is necessary that a Christian follows the instructions (or commandments) that Christ gives him or her about how

this Christian can be able to walk according to “the commandments which Christ and the Heavenly Father” instruct him or her to follow. And, in turn, among the central or main commandments of the Lord for a Christian is the calling for a Christian (1) to abide continually in Christ, (2) to persevere in the freedom one received from the Lord, and (3) not to go back to the subjection to sin and the Law of Moses to which one was previously subject, as briefly exemplified in the following texts:

*Romans 3: 19* **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

*20* **Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

*Romans 6: 14* **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

*Galatians 5: 1* **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**

...  
*4* **You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**  
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So, when the Lord teaches that the one who keeps His commandments is the one who loves Him, it is evident that He is not teaching people to go back to the ways in which they sought to keep the commandments in the First or Old Covenant, under which they first needed to keep the commandments of the old law so that they could think of claiming God's blessings based on the fulfillment of the works required by this law. Commandments that none of the supporters of this law were indeed able to fulfill.

In other words, **by observing more attentively the Lord's teaching that the one who keeps His commandments is the one who loves Him, we can also see that this teaching of the Lord shows that the one who loves the Lord has as the fruit of love for God the keeping of the Lord's commandments or instructions for him or her, and not the opposite way that proposes that it is by keeping the commandments that a person comes to obtain the right to receive the love of God.**

The point addressed in the previous paragraph is also evidenced when the Lord Jesus Christ teaches that:

- ⇒ 1) ***He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me***, showing that for a person to keep the commandments of God or the instruction of the Lord, one first needs to have received instruction from God, which, in turn, is shared to him or her by the Lord through fellowship with Him;
- ⇒ 2) ***For whatever is born of God overcomes the world***, showing that for a person to be able to keep the commandments of God, one must first be begotten by the love of the Heavenly Father and the Son of His Love;



- ⇒ 3) It was in abiding in the love of God that He, Christ Himself, gave the example to Christians of how they could become able and strengthened to keep the commandments of the Heavenly Father and of the Lord Jesus.

And if faced with the statements that “*we love Him because He first loved us,*” “*without Me you can do nothing,*” and “*what do you have that you did not receive*” a person still does not feel sufficiently supported to know that it is heavenly love that leads to keeping the commandments of God, and not the other way around, the Lord still reiterates the new condition of the Christian by also teaching that:

*John 14: 15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

*2 Corinthians 5: 14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;  
15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

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Whereas people under the law sought to attain the love of God by justification through works, in life in Christ, love is given to a Christian to help, strengthen, and even urge him or her to voluntarily or willingly live and walk as one who delights in keeping the Lord's instructions, beginning with the instruction to remain in fellowship with the Lord and rooted in Him.

God's love is what enables and moves a Christian to live according to God's will. And it is not the Christian's own effort to please God that enables him or her to live and walk in the will of God, for if that were the case, a Christian would be able to live the Christian life even dissociated from the continuous dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In the next chapter, we will also see the text that declares that faith without love is of no benefit to those who seek and practice it, just as performing works called good, but without love, does not qualify the person who performs them either. That is, it is not the practice of good works that qualifies a person to receive the love of God, but it is the love of God that strengthens a person to perform good works, just as it works with the grace of God, which is an inseparable partner of heavenly love.

**Thus, when a person does not “abide in Christ,” one also does not remain in the love of God to practice it or to walk in it, for as the love of God is inseparable from the Lord, it cannot be stored up to be used without a person “being in Christ.” The love of God cannot be learned and developed to be used from learned skills without being or abiding “in Christ.”**

**If a person moves away from “abiding in Christ,” one also automatically moves away from being in the love of God, becoming deprived of the condition to live and walk in the love of the Lord.**

**If a person abides in God, one abides in God's love. If a person does not remain in God, one also does not remain in God's love.**

Given this, **we can see that walking in the love of God has always been, is, and always will be the result of the freedom of action that a person grants to Christ for Him to work in one's life through the Holy Spirit of God.**

Returning here to the opposite thought of the last paragraph, if keeping the commandments generated love, we would fall back into the same system of life conduct that the people lived under the Law of Moses, for if keeping the commandments generated the love of God, the production of this heavenly love would not be under the control of God, but of human beings. That is, if the production of God's love were by keeping God's commandments, human beings themselves could produce God's love as they obeyed these commandments.

Furthermore, **it is not the obedience of human beings to the commandments that makes the source of love in God able to produce more or less love. The source of love in God is unlimited and constant in God, as are all the gifts of the Lord. That is why, when a person receives in one's life what the source of love offers and grants him or her, one also becomes nourished with the love one needs to keep the Lord's instructions.**

Therefore, also returning once more to the crucial condition that the aspect of "cause and effect" has regarding walking in the love of God, we will try to exemplify this in another way, drawing a parallel with the cause and symptoms that some types of illness cause in people.

Just as an example, and without seeking exact medical precision, we can note that depending on the type of disease that affects an individual, one also starts to have a reaction of resistance of one's body to the disease, resistance that, on several occasions, even causes a fever reaction in one's body.

In several situations, a person suffering from a disease does not necessarily "feel the disease itself" and "nor does one specifically feel the internal fight against the disease," but in many cases, one can feel the temperature variation in one's body.

Fever, then, is not the disease itself nor its cause, but it is a symptom that signals to the person that something abnormal is happening in one's physical organism.

For the sick person, fever signals that one needs special care and that one needs to be attentive to monitoring the functioning of one's body better and, still, that one may need a more in-depth investigation of the real cause that has triggered one's feverish condition.

As a symptom, the fever can even represent a vital cooperation for a person to be aware of a disease or some other irregular condition of one's body and so that one may seek and find a solution for one's state of weakness.

So, if we return to the aspect of "cause and effect" regarding walking in love, we see that similarly to the fever, just by way of example, keeping or not keeping God's commandments may signal whether a person is or is not conducting an appropriate relationship with the love of God.

That is, **when the Lord teaches people that not keeping His commandments also expresses the lack of love for Him, it is the lack of love for Him that the Lord is aiming to highlight in the foreground, and not that a person should primarily invest all one's strength in trying to keep the commandments instructed by the Lord so that, through these practices, one would attain the love of the Lord.**

The attitude of starting to be negligent about keeping God's commandments is similar to the workings of the fever. It signals that something is not in order in the functioning that an individual's Christian life should have so that the aspect that is causing the non-keeping of the commandments may also be identified and treated at the point that is originating this attitude or posture of the Christian.

If, for example, a person begins to lose joy in keeping God's instructions for one's life, something not appropriate to what should be regular or fundamental in a Christian's life is taking place.

**If a person begins to stray from keeping God's commandments, it means that a more significant cause is producing this conduct. That is, if a person starts to move away from the keeping of God's commandments, one is, in reality, moving away from the love of God in one's heart, having as a result or external exposure the departing from the keeping of God's instructions for one's life.**

By staying or keeping oneself close to the love of God, a Christian puts oneself in a position where the love of the Lord works on one's behalf so that one also remains willing to do the will of God or follow the Lord's instructions for one's life. However, when a person turns away from God's love, this also causes him or her to withdraw from keeping or practicing God's instructions for one's life.

When a person begins to distance oneself from a living and continuous relationship with God, one begins to distance oneself from God's love, having the withdrawal from keeping God's instructions in one's life as a symptom that evidences this.

Or still, **the distancing of a person from God also causes one's distancing from the love of God, which, consequently, makes the person withdraw from walking in the will of God or His instruction, and not the opposite,** declared by the Lord also in the following text:

*John 14: 23 **Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.***

*24 **He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."***

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The attitude or posture of "not keeping the commandments of God" is like a fever. It is like a symptom. However, the cause that leads a Christian to "not keep the commandments of God" is "growing cold" in one's permanence in God's love, which, in turn, is caused by the person's withdrawal from the living relationship with one's Creator.

Seen from yet another angle, when a person distances oneself from fellowship with the Lord, one also distances oneself from the desire to do the will of God and the strength and power to carry it out, for one withdraws oneself from the One from whom one is called to feed oneself to also live and walk in Him or through Him, which equally applies also regarding the love of God.

*John 6: 57 **"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."***

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Thus, **if a person understands the order or process that awakens love in one's heart and the effect that this love produces also to be willing and strengthened to practice love by keeping the Lord's word or instructions for one's life, one also places oneself in the condition of being able to perceive when the desire and joy for keeping God's instructions begin to "grow cold."** And this, so that one may then soon seek to reestablish one's fellowship with the Lord and return to being broadly connected to the source that produces the fruit of love.

If a person keeps God's commandments with joy, one does so because one first has been in God and God in him or her, for it is the Spirit of God that causes willingness in the heart of the one who welcomes the work of the Lord in one's personal life. However, when a Christian realizes that one is withdrawing from keeping God's commandments, one should return to the relationship with God to be filled with God's love again and thus receive the joy of walking in the path appointed by the Lord.

When a person is in God and God is in this individual, and the Spirit of the Lord works in one's heart, the love of God generates the will and the doing of keeping the commandments or instructions of God for one's life. One more reason every Christian is called to be diligent to heed, first, the instruction to abide in God and His love.

*1 John 3: 24 **Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.***

*Philippians 2: 13 **... for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

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Additionally, in the prayer that the prophet Daniel made to God and that he recorded in his writings, we can also see expressed the order of action of God's attributes and people's love for God that consequently results in keeping the Lord's commandments.

*Daniel 9: 4 **And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ..."***

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And still, before moving forward to the conclusion of the present chapter, we would like to add that another consideration similar to those exposed above is presented in the Scriptures when teaching about the Christian's relationship with the knowledge of God, by which **the Lord teaches us that if a person knows God, one will also keep His commandments, but that if one does not keep His commandments, it is because one does not know God as one really should.**

Therefore, regarding the aspect of the previous paragraph, if a person does not keep the commandments of God, one lacks the knowledge of the glory of God. That is, one lacks the knowledge about the “Person” or the “Being” of God. And the non-observance of God's instructions signals to a person that one does not know God as one should know Him or signals that one's fundamental or essential lack is not the "non-observance of God's commandments," but, instead, the lack of knowing the Lord more, as follows:

*1 John 2: 3 **Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.***

*4 **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.***

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We recall here that Peter, in his second epistle, similarly also records that all the Christian's needs for one's new life and godliness in the Lord can be made available to him or her by increasing knowledge of the Heavenly Father and of Christ Jesus, which, in turn, is granted to the Christian by the relationship of fellowship one maintains with the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

Thus, once again: **The effect of fellowship with the Lord results in the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His love, which, in turn, results in wanting God's will, as well as the capability to practice love or so-called walking in love.**

Finally, in this chapter, still under the aspect of “cause and effect,” in which love is first granted so that the Christian can also practice it, we would like to mention that **love strengthens a Christian to walk according to the will of God and does not terrify him or her with the fear of perhaps not fulfilling some commandment and, therefore, suffering damage as was the damage to someone who did not fulfill “the whole Law of Moses.”**

One of the aspects that most oppress and torment human beings is fear. And in the world, there are different types of fears that try to haunt people day and night and seek to cause severe restrictions to people's lives, seeking, however, as a bigger goal, to prevent them from living in the will of God.

Nevertheless, as to the love of God, this is not so. On the contrary, God's perfect love is the virtue that casts out all fear so that it is banished from people's lives, for the “Spirit” that God gives Christians is the Spirit of Freedom and Peace, not the “spirit of bondage” that acts to terrify those who are subject to it.

In this way, **if a person presents oneself in trust to God and His love, the Lord, in His perfect love, also helps and guides this person in releasing him or her from the fears that afflict one's heart, knowing that there are no phobias or deep fears that God's love is not able to cast out.**

Moreover, **God's love is full of mercy and kindness and can deliver a person even from fear of the consequences of following God's very love.**

*1 John 4: 18 **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.***

*Romans 8: 15 **For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."***

*16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ...***

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A Christian is called to seek first to be in Christ Jesus, for being in the Lord and in His love, which are unshakable, one is also in the place that results in one's eternal protection and in which no one can separate a Christian from God.

If a Christian abides in Christ and His love, the Lord Himself declares that nothing or no one can separate this Christian from the love of Christ.

*1 John 4: 4 **You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.***

*Romans 8: 28 **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.***

*29 **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.***

*30 **Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.***

*31 **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?***

*32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

*33 **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.***

*34 **Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.***

*35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?***

*36 **As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."***

*37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.***

*38 **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,***

*39 **nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

## **C6. The New Creature Has the Value of Living and Walking in Christ Jesus Confirmed and Sustained in the Love of God**

As we mentioned in the first chapter of this theme, making considerations about God's love is always a great challenge because this love permeates everything God does and because God Himself is love.

Nevertheless, **when we start to see the love of God from the perspective of it being a reference point for everything that God does and for everything that a Christian is called to do, perhaps we can perceive in an easier or more evident way how much love is needed in everything. And this is so because it is through the calling to act in love that we can understand that the essence of what God does and calls Christians to do aims at the good of people.**

Love is what, perhaps, we could compare as the plummet, the reference point, the basis of alignment, or the proper motivation for all other aspects of God's calling so that each one of them is used in its right measure and for an adequate purpose. Ant this certainly is one of the reasons why God's love is also called the "bond of perfection," as follows:

*Colossians 3: 12* **Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;**  
*13* **bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.**  
*14* **But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.**  
 ----

God's will is that all people be saved in Christ Jesus and that, in this salvation, they come to live and walk by faith in the Lord and the heavenly power granted to them in the condition of new creatures in Christ.

God's will, however, is not to grant faith and power so that people, for example, may have strength and power to act for purposes that are inappropriate, selfish, greedy, according to the intents of their own hearts, or that harm their lives and of their fellow people. On the contrary, people need God's love as a support in faith and power precisely to not deviate from the purpose for which these aspects are given to a Christian.

**For a Christian to be able to live and walk properly in the faith and the power of God, the Lord, together with faith and power, grants the "Spirit of Love and Moderation" so that, through that which establishes a perfect bond between the various virtues that God shares, a Christian may come to use faith and power also appropriately and for the good purpose of the Lord.**

*2 Timothy 1: 7* ***For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (or moderation).***

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Yes, in Christ Jesus, the righteous one, the one who is justified by the grace and righteousness of God, is called to live and walk by faith, knowing that without faith, it is impossible to please God. However, life by faith also needs to be appropriate and with appropriate purposes, which, in turn, has love as its foundation and help to be channeled to what is suitable and approved before the Lord.

Let us see below, then, two more texts that affirm the value of love as a virtue granted by God and that accredits life according to faith in the Lord, remembering that a broader explanation of the meaning of circumcision or uncircumcision (which avail nothing in Christ) is found in the theme The New Creature in Christ Jesus:

*1 Corinthians 13: 1* ***Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.***

*2* ***And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.***

*3* ***And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.***

*Galatians 5: 6* ***For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.***

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In a sense, we could say, then, that **a person's actions that are devoid of love are like acting in vain, in the void, striking in the air, or walking without a profitable goal in life**, whose way of living and walking is refuted by Paul in his life when he draws a parallel with the performance of an athlete, as follows:

*1 Corinthians 9: 24* ***Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.***

*25* ***And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.***

*26* ***Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.***

----

Since the goal of acting in faith or power, but devoid of love, does not qualify a person or what one accomplishes, an individual who walks this journey without the love of God is also an individual who does not follow this journey in line with God's purpose for one's life or according to ***the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.***

Thus, **on the one hand, it is possible for a person to hold faith as very important and in high esteem, but at the same time, one may also despise**



the value of the very faith one claims to cherish by the fact that one does not link love to the faith in which one seeks to live and walk.

God's will is indeed to give people faith so that they believe in Him and walk with confidence in Him. This, however, is accompanied by the purpose that they walk in the “exceedingly excellent way,” the “way of love,” or the “way of living and walking in Christ Jesus.”

*1 Timothy 1: 14 **And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.***

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Finally, in this chapter, **yet another aspect that can be considered about love being the “bond of perfection”** concerns what links or unites several other aspects by “binding them in a similar way how a metal alloy works.”

In people's daily lives, they use a series of objects that have an apparent external material, such as taps, cutlery, and many other things, but which are only usable, in their particular forms, due to the fact that in these objects are also inserted elements that “alloy or bind them” or provide firmness, hardness, or support to what is seen and used by people.

Thus, **in addition to conferring purpose and value on what one intends to do or does, love is also the aspect of God's virtues that confers sustenance, firmness, “binding or alloying,” or credibility to an individual and what one intends to do and does through one's various postures and actions.**

Considering that the Lord is love and that the Lord is the One who is the foundation or support of all those who believe in Him, it is also by abiding in the love of God that a Christian can know the state of one's condition before the Lord Himself and regarding the actions one intends to perform or is performing.

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

*Jude 1: 20 **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**  
21 **keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.***

----

Considering, therefore, the love of God as (1) the reference point for every thought or action of a Christian to be established under an appropriate purpose, (2) the bond of perfection that harmonizes the use of the various gifts that the Lord gives to Christians, and, still, (3) the bond of perfection that gives support or sustains the life of a Christian and one's actions, we would like to repeat the following texts below:

*1 John 4: 9 **In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.***

*1 Corinthians 14: 1(a) **Pursue love, ...***

*Ephesians 5: 2 **And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.***

*Colossians 3: 14 **But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.***

*Ephesians 4: 15 **But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.***

## C7. Parameters for Checking the Practice of True Love or Walking in Love

In the previous chapter, we saw that the love of God is also the bond of perfection and the support of a Christian's actions in the other gifts granted by God or in the different aspects of the Lord's calling for a Christian, which, consequently, shows that love, of course, does not discard the other gifts and virtues of God to which it serves as a bond, as, for example, the truth, righteousness, and grace of God.

***2 John 1: 3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.***

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So, any proposition that claims to be according to the love of God must also, obligatorily or conjointly, be equally grounded in the truth, righteousness, and grace of God to be conformed to the criteria of what determines whether a proposition is truly in line with heavenly love.

Furthermore, also the other parameters that are associated with the descriptions of God's love and the practice of this love are very evident in the Scriptures so that Christians do not become confused and entangled by propositions that oppose them and their hope in the Lord, plus the fact that perfect love is still confirmed by the witness of the Spirit of the Lord in the heart of every Christian who gives due attention to Him.

***Romans 5: 5** Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

----

On the other hand, any proposition that presents itself as being in line with the love of God, but which, at the same time, is a proposition that promulgates unrighteousness or lies, is characterized as a false proposition of acting in the love of God, for as we have seen in previous chapters, love works according to the truth and righteousness of God, not rejoicing and not cooperating with unrighteousness or falsehood.

***1 Corinthians 13: 4** Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;*  
***5** does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;*  
***6** does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ...*

----

By announcing His love as the bond of perfection, the Lord has also already declared that what is presented in a corrupted way regarding truth, righteousness, and heavenly grace does not actually have the origin in the heavenly love that God longs to grant and

grants to those who believe in Christ Jesus in their hearts and receive Him as Lord in their lives.

When someone, for example, tries to announce the grace of God claiming, on the one hand, that this grace is only validated by the practices of the Law of Moses or, on the other hand, that under this grace a person does not suffer any harm even if one again subjects oneself to sin, this individual who proposes these claims is in no way acting according to the love of God. On the contrary, one seeks to corrupt both the Lord's grace and love. A reason why a Christian should abstain from this type of person or idea.

Similarly, when an individual announces that one, out of love for God and one's fellow people, is willing to be a "mediator" between people and God, one is likewise not acting in the love of God, seeking to corrupt the truth into a lie and the righteousness that is in Christ into unrighteousness, for God has already clearly declared that, except for Christ, He does not accept mediators between Him and every human being, as also addressed in the theme Walking in Truth.

*1 Timothy 2: 4 (God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*  
*5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*  
*6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

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Therefore, **the various parameters that apply to verify the veracity or integrity of truth, grace, righteousness, salvation, and the promises of God, and many other aspects, equally, by extension, are also applicable to the investigation of every act that presents itself as an act of God's love, for as already mentioned, love is the bond of perfection of each of the other aspects referenced in this paragraph.**

And since the parameters of the various aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph are already addressed in specific themes, such as The Gospel of God's Righteousness, The Gospel of Salvation, The Gospel of God's Grace, Walking in an Acceptable and Worthy Manner of God, and Walking in Truth, we do not intend to go over them in this subject, in which, however, we would like to emphasize a little more a specific point about the investigation, checking, or validation of a person's love towards one's fellow people.

In this way, although we have already mentioned in previous chapters that a Christian is called to love, according to the love of God, those who are also of the Lord, we would still like to discuss at this point some considerations of the two texts that follow below:

*1 John 4: 7 **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.***

*1 John 5: 1 **Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.***

*2 **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.***

*3 **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.***

*4 **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.***

*5 **Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***

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In these last texts, we can notice again that love comes from God, that the Christian has a new life that comes from God, and that it is according to these facts or because of these facts that Christians are called to love one another.

Nevertheless, in the last text above, we can see that there is an even more explicit expression that states how a Christian should love the children of God with the love of the Lord, teaching very objectively even how it can be ascertained whether or not a Christian is in fact appropriately practicing true love towards one's fellow people.

When the text in reference declares that ***by this we know that we love the children of God***, followed by the instruction of how this is accomplished, the text is presenting one of the ways that most objectively clarify if a Christian is or is not loving indeed those one considers as one's fellow believers of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have already seen in previous chapters that the Lord instructed His disciples to love one another with the love in which they were also loved by Him, which, in turn, is according to the love of Christ for the Heavenly Father. However, in the above text of 1 John 5, we find an exposition of the same subject detailing even a little more what had already been taught previously by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Under these last considerations, let us then look at the specific text in reference once more, as follows:

*1 John 5: 2 **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.***

---

Given this, how can a Christian then know if one really loves one's fellow believers of faith in Christ Jesus?

Following the text above, the answer to this last question is very interesting, for the answer to a horizontal relationship question is presented, firstly, through the Christian's conduct regarding a relationship with the Lord.

**It is primarily in how a Christian relates in love with God, and consequently with God's instructions for one's life, that this Christian can find out if one loves indeed the other children of God.**

**Thus, if someone does not love God, rejects God's love, and consequently does not walk or practice God's will for one's life, one also refrains from loving oneself and one's neighbor.**

That is, no matter how much a person makes tireless declarations of love to those one considers one's fellow believers in faith in God or those who are close to him or her, one only loves them indeed with the love of God, the appropriate content, if one first loves God and follows the instructions of God's will for one's life, for a person who does not practice God's will does not practice good toward oneself and also does not promote good to others.

Since God's instruction to His children is the fruit of God's love for them, if Christians reject God's instruction, they also reject God's love, thereby placing themselves in the condition or position in which they also no longer practice the love of God towards their fellow people.

As seen in the theme Works, Labors, and Services, it is the Lord Jesus Christ that a Christian is called to follow and serve. One more reason why serving or not serving one's fellow men is characterized as a consequence of Christ's instruction to every Christian.

*Colossians 3: 23 **And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,***  
*24 **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.***

----

In other words, considering that the love of God is not a synonym for unlimited tolerance towards unrighteousness and towards sin, for the love of God is not an accomplice of sin, nor does it cover up the darkness and its works of unrighteousness, "loving enemies with the love of God" is not "rejoicing" at the unrighteousness they do. On the contrary, love for enemies is also expressed by prayer to God so that all may come to the knowledge of the truth, repent of their perverse practices, and enjoy fellowship with the One and Eternal Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Similarly, "to love fellow believers of faith in Christ" is not to give in to the selfish interests of each one of them. Instead, it is to persevere in God and God's will so that fellow believers may benefit from the will of God being carried out by those who indeed love their fellow believers in the Lord.

Thus, when the Scriptures instruct Christians to love God, love other Christians, and also love their enemies, they teach them to love them in all situations equally with the love of God, which, in turn, the Lord clearly announces and teaches that it expresses itself in practice as follows:

*John 14: 15 **"If you love Me, keep My commandments."***

*John 14: 23 **Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.***

*24 **He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."***

*2 John 1: 6 **This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.***

----

**Although every Christian is called to love other Christians, people in general, and even one's enemies, it is in loving the Lord and following His instruction that a Christian puts oneself in a position to truly love others or walk in the love of God also to love one's fellow men.**

Therefore, just as it happens in the situation where people try to do works “for God” and not “together with God,” and because of this, they fail to achieve the purpose of walking in the works of God prepared beforehand for them to walk in, so also, a person cannot effectively practice the love of God according to the will of the Lord if one does not first love God and does not walk according to the will of God for one's life.

**Because many people do not pay attention to how they are called to practice love or walk in love, many of their works, which they even call “Christian works,” are not indeed works based on the truth, on the righteousness of God, the fruit of instruction from the Lord, and supported by the “bond of perfection,” being, instead, deprived of being recognized by God as worthy of some heavenly or eternal value.**

When, for example, people create institutions or associations that claim to shelter God, despite the Lord having said that He does not dwell in human institutions and buildings but dwells in the hearts of those who believe in Him, and when around these institutions they build ministries to which people are subject and obliged to serve with their time and resources, through the collection of tithes and offerings that God never required of Christians, these works show themselves as not being works according to the righteousness of God. And, therefore, they are not works according to the love of God either, however elaborate or attractive the speeches of those who promulgate this kind of works may be. (Aspects covered more widely in the themes The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, and Another Gospel or A Different Gospel).

*Matthew 24: 23 **"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.***

*24 **For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.***

*25 **See, I have told you beforehand.***

*26 **Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."***

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Additionally, the Lord also warned that many will say: Lord, Lord, claiming to have done many works “in the name of God.” However, since their works were not done in righteousness, in love, or according to the will of God, the Lord will not recognize them if they do not humble themselves in repentance before God in due time.

*Matthew 7: 21 **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.***

*22 **Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'***

*23 **And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'***

*24 **Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:***

*25 **and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."***

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Faced with these last texts, we can know, then, that those who propagate, teach, and support works that will never be approved by God, naming them, however, works of God, do not love their fellow men, but propagate works of unrighteousness. And it is up to them to carry out a work of profound repentance and change their practices and preaching, preceded, above all, by returning to the One who should be the first love of their lives, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ and His instructions.

Thus, **if a Christian is not moved in one's heart to love other fellow believers of faith in Christ as a result of one's love primarily for God and the Lord's instruction, one needs to review one's position towards the love of God, always keeping in mind that to love others, one needs to be loving God to the point of also having the desire to walk according to the commandments (instructions) that God gives for one's life.**

The regular thing for a Christian who loves God and follows the Lord's instruction is also for him or her to be moved by this love to love other fellow believers in Christ, remembering, however, that this should occur in this order so that each Christian knows that one is indeed loving one's fellow men according to the love of God.

*1 John 4: 21 **And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.***

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Moving forward, we also remember here that one of the most beautiful aspects of life in Christ is the restoration of the simplicity that can exist in the fellowship of fellow believers in Christ with each other. However, particularly also in this case, it should be remembered that this simplicity can only be achieved if each Christian first loves the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord's instruction for one's life.

The revelation of Christ to the world introduced a new way for people to be able to relate with fellow believers of faith in God. However, it is new precisely because it can be done first in God and then be reflected or shared among fellow believers of faith in Christ.

Similarly, just as "living in Christ," "living in the Holy Spirit," or being taught of the Lord precedes "walking in Christ" or "walking in the Spirit of



**the Lord,” so loving God, to the point of walking in His instruction or His will, also precedes a Christian's love for one's family, fellow believers of faith in Christ, and people in general.**

Given this, a Christian does good to another Christian when one does the will of God. However, if one abstains from practicing God's will for one's life, one also begins to refrain from doing good towards the other children of God.

**In yet other words, fidelity or faithfulness to God and God's will is what manifests whether a Christian really loves one's fellow believer of faith in Christ, even if what God instructs an individual to do, in some situations, displeases other people or even other Christians.**

To love fellow Christians fraternally is not to meet the yearnings and desires of each one of them, but it is to do and remain doing what God instructs each Christian to do, an aspect also addressed in the theme Fellowship of Christians in the World.

If we still look at the example of the Lord Jesus, we can understand that if He had done everything that the disciples wanted Him to do, He would not have been faithful to God to die for His disciples and for all people on the cross of Calvary to provide them with the way of redemption and eternal salvation.

As yet another example, parents also love their children, with the love of God, when they position themselves in favor of God in their lives, and not when they fulfill all their children's wishes.

So, a Christian loves one's neighbor when one loves God and is faithful to God. And even if the purpose of an instruction from God, at one point, may not be widely visible regarding the good it will bring to fellow believers of the faith in Christ, the instruction of God is still the way to be followed by those who love the Lord, for only God knows all things and when they converge for the good of those who love Him with heavenly love.

**Even the brotherly love that tries to overcome the love of God and the love of works that tries to overcome or oppose the condition of a Christian to have God as the first love in one's heart lack the content of the perfect love of God, for the love of God is not given to Christians to draw them away from God Himself or to put God second in their lives.**

*Revelation 2: 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

*5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."*

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**God should always be a Christian's first love. And this should never be altered, neither by brotherly love nor by the so-called Christian works.**

On the other hand, when God is not placed first and is no longer the first love of the Christian's life, the lamp that houses the light that illuminates the heart of this Christian is subject to extinguishing. For this reason, also to keep the light of the lamp in one's heart always burning and vigorous, a Christian is called to remain attentive to the Unique One whom one is called to have as one's first love.

*John 8: 12* ***Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."***

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Summarizing here, then, the last paragraphs, we remember that **the first works of the Christian are faith in God, hope in God, and love for the Heavenly Father, His Beloved Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit through the very love of God.**

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to highlight that considering that an integral part of the love of God in the life of a Christian is also reflected in the love toward one's fellow men, no Christian needs to fear that by choosing the Lord as one's first love, one will no longer be able to love others. On the contrary, it is in loving God and following God's will that a Christian also finds the appropriate measure of love for oneself and one's fellow people, as well as the provision and support to practice this love according to the truth, the grace, and the righteousness of God.

*Mark 8: 35* ***"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."***

- Psalms 16: 1* ***Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.***
- 2 O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."***
- 3 As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."***

## C8. The Love that Passes Knowledge, but which Can Be Known by the Help of the Holy Spirit

Living and walking in the love of God is an enormous challenge and confronts a person's deepest intentions and interests, for by the love of God, a person is driven to review even one's most profound understandings and purposes.

Nevertheless, knowing that the inner and more profound changes in the heart represent an enormous challenge to people, God also grants Christians an extraordinary provision by which they can be guided in the relationship with His singular and sublime love, not letting Christians in helpless conditions in their relationship with heavenly love.

And, in turn, **the Lord's all-special provision for a Christian to face and adequately relate to the love of God is granted to him or her by the strengthening with heavenly power of the "inner man," through the Holy Spirit**, as described in the text below:

*Ephesians 3: 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
*15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*  
*16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*  
*17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*  
*18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height;*  
*19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*  
*20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*  
*21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

----

So, on the one hand, living and walking in God's love is indeed very challenging and impossible to be understood and achieved through human effort, development, and discipline. On the other hand, it is God's will that every Christian should live in His love and walk in His love. For this reason, **the Lord Himself extends to Christians the perfect provision so that the relationship with heavenly love can become a reality for everyone who longs to live and walk in the love of the Heavenly Father, which is also called the "love of Christ."**

In the last text above, we can again observe that it is not through a person's fleshly effort that one can come to understand the love that works according to the will of the Heavenly Father, but that the way to relate to the love that is in Christ Jesus also comes from the Lord.

That is, **the love of God certainly exceeds all human understanding. However, by the Holy Spirit, who searches the depths of God, each Christian can have access to the knowledge of love in the appropriate and perfect measure that one needs in the most diverse moments of one's life,**

**for the Holy Spirit is granted to Christians also for them being able to understand what is given to them by the Lord in His grace and that the natural mind cannot assimilate merely by human or natural knowledge, as also presented in the following text:**

***1 Corinthians 2: 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.***

***13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.***

***14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.***

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What is impossible for humans is not impossible for God. The human being is very limited in one's own knowledge of the things of the Lord. However, God can put His perfect love in people's hearts and still, by His Spirit, make them reach the understanding of what passes the knowledge the natural world can achieve.

A person under a merely natural condition does not have the capacity to understand, live, and walk in heavenly love. However, God can make a Christian realize what is necessary to live and walk in newness of life and heavenly love if this Christian allows the Almighty Lord to help him or her.

***1 Corinthians 12: 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.***

***Ephesians 3: 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,***

***21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

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In the face of the love of God, the bond of perfection, the love that passes all knowledge, the perfect love, and the love perfectly manifested to the world in Christ Jesus, a Christian may feel too fragile to receive it and still walk in it. However, it is precisely in one's frailty or weakness that a Christian is called to walk in the love of God, for it is also through love that God enables the Christian to walk in the heavenly will.

**The Christian is a vessel that, despite being fragile and limited, can be enabled by the Lord to receive the heavenly love and to live and walk in it, for it is Christ, in His eternal love, who sustains the fragile vessels to live and walk in the love that contains such sublime and exceedingly excellent attributes.**

- 2 *Corinthians 4: 5* **For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.**
- 6 **For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**
- 7 **But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.**

2 *Corinthians 12: 9* **And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities (or weaknesses), that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

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Moreover, God does not give His love to Christians so that they, after receiving a measure of heavenly love, might be strong by themselves, but that they, despite their weaknesses, might be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the love they receive from the Lord through the granting of the Holy Spirit into their hearts.

**It is through the strengthening and instruction in love that the Lord continually grants through the Holy Spirit that a Christian is called to understand the breadth of God's love for him or her and so that, from this strengthening and instruction, the Christian may also practice the love that God shares in Christ Jesus.**

Of oneself, the human being is incapable of loving God and one's neighbor with perfect love. However, God is able to grant His love to human beings so that they love God and their fellow people with heavenly love and under the instruction of the Lord Himself.

Thus, however challenging a person's relationship with the love of God is and comes to produce profound changes in the Christian's understanding and life, God's love is full of mercy, presented for the Christian's good, and presented under the Lord's declaration that if we have been saved by His love, much more shall we also be supported and strengthened by the same love after we have been saved.

Therefore, **the love of God that calls and leads a person to salvation in the Lord, and which is the expression of one of the fundamental virtues of the Heavenly Father Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, is the same love that accompanies and leads a Christian also to walk in love and the good works which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in them.**

- Romans 5: 8* **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**
- 9 **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**
- 10 **For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**
- 11 **And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

*Ephesians 2: 4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,***  
*5 **even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),***  
*6 **and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,***  
*7 **that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.***

*Romans 8: 32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

...  
*37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.***

*38 **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

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In this way, in the face of all these declarations of God's love, mercy, and goodness towards each person, once again it is shown by the Scriptures that walking in love is the result, above all, of God's very love towards a Christian.

*1 Corinthians 1: 4 **I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,***  
*5 **that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,***  
*6 **even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ...***

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We recall here, then, what was mentioned at the beginning of this theme, that is, that for all the path or actions for which God invites a Christian to live, walk, or practice, the Lord Himself also offers the provision so that each Christian can carry it out according to the heavenly will, which certainly also applies to the exceedingly excellent way that God offers to be followed in love in Christ Jesus.

And here still, before advancing to the conclusion of this chapter, we would also like to mention that **the fact that God's love is full of mercy should never imply the inappropriate thought that it would eventually be superfluous, frivolous, or weak.**

God's love is very mighty, mighty to the point that death itself cannot stop it. Therefore, also the mercy that is in the love of God is a demonstration of the power of the Lord, for it is also only by the power of the love of God that a person's sins, iniquities, or trespasses can be forgiven according to righteousness and right judgment.

God's love is not abstract and theoretical, for in His love, the Lord calls every Christian to have a firm commitment to God's will and the instructions of this will. In His love, God calls every Christian to firmly commit to God's truth and righteousness.

Similarly, God's love is also not based on volatile "human feelings" and is not as volatile as human beings are in their purposes. God's love is solid and eternally cannot be shaken, altered, or destroyed.

Thus, when a person abides in God's love, this same love strengthens that person in the characteristics of constancy and perseverance in God's will, for heavenly love is patient, long-suffering, endures adversity, never fails, and loves the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God to the point of also manifesting it in the most diverse practical aspects of life.

In this way, a person who is not constant or is weak in one's natural conditions regarding commitments of fidelity can achieve, through the constant love of God, attitudes and postures that one would never think one could achieve.

**A person who walks in the love of God can be sustained in the way of the Lord because just as with God there is no variation or shadow of turning, so the love of God is unchanging, constant, firm, and from eternity to eternity, for God is love.**

**By the Spirit of the Lord, the Christian is strengthened within him or her so that one may receive the love of God in one's life, which is Christ dwelling in one's heart. And, in turn, it is because of the presence of Christ in the heart of the Christian, as the foundation of the hope that the glory and the power of God will be manifested in love, that a Christian is called to walk in love in the most diverse areas and attitudes of one's life.**

*Ephesians 3: 17 ... **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,**  
18 **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height,**  
19 **to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

*Colossians 1: 26 ... **the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.**  
27 **To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**  
28 **Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.***

*Philippians 1: 9 **And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,**  
10 **that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**  
11 **being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.***

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Therefore, if many Christians have lived a life of a high level of inconstancy in their goal of being faithful to God, one of the main reasons for this fact is that they still do not have exposed themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit to root them in the love of God. And, in turn, the reason they are not rooted and grounded in this love is because many have neglected continual fellowship with Christ and His Holy Spirit. (Aspects also addressed in the themes The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, The Core Principle of Life for a Christian, Watchful in Prayer, and Rooted and Established in Christ.)

This last point alerts us, then, to the fact that despite the greatness, breadth, height, and depth of God's love in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit is given to the heart of every Christian so that each one, in one's inner man, voluntarily also allows the Spirit of the Lord to strengthen him or her so that one can understand the love of God to the extent that one needs to know it, as well as so that one may even be an individual who practices this love according to the power of God that operates in one's life.

When the Lord Jesus Christ declared that those who believe in Him according to the way the Scriptures instruct them to believe would also receive from within them, through the Holy Spirit, the flowing of rivers of living waters, He certainly was also considering that one of the main characteristics of this living water is the very love by which God gives us life through the salvation offered to every human being in Christ Jesus.

*John 7: 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

*39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

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Finally, we would like to recall once more that despite the greatness and the breadth of God's love being so prominent, the Lord in everything knows how to properly assist those who receive this so exalted love from Him.

*Hebrews 4: 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

*16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Romans 8: 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*



*27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

*28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

*32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

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In the calling to walk in love, a Christian also has, on God's part, the promise of being provided in everything to understand what is necessary to understand about this love. However, through this same heavenly love, God also offers to assist the Christian in everything that the Lord calls him or her to live and walk.

Therefore, to conclude, we once again mention the following texts:

*Ephesians 2: 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*  
*5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ...*

*1 John 4: 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*  
*10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

*1 Corinthians 14: 1(a) Pursue love, ....*

*Ephesians 4: 15 ... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.*

*Ephesians 5: 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

*Colossians 3: 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

*John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

*John 17: 3 **"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."***

*1 John 4: 13 **By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.***

*Romans 5: 5 **Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

## Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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