

A Quest for More Series - Part 2
“More of God’s Love”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
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Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

We are now ten days into our 40 days of fasting and prayer. How’s it going? Have you noticed a difference in your habits? Have you noticed a difference in the practicalities of feeling the presence of God in your life? Are things different?

Last week talked about having MORE of God. Not more of what He can do for us, but more of Him. We dealt with MORE of the PRESENCE of God. Today, we’ll be talking about MORE of GOD’s LOVE.

When we begin to have an understanding of what God’s love is all about, I believe that we will then begin to understand that we can be examples and an extension of that love to others. For me, it’s not just the fact that God is love and that He loves me; but that the love that He’s given to me is available to others as well. God wants to use me to be an example of His love to others.

Have you ever seen the TV game show “Jeopardy”?

As we begin, I have a set of set of facts for you concerning a particular song....with the answer coming in the form of a question.... “What is.....?”

- The best known Christian song worldwide.
- The song most parents teach their children first.
- Has been translated into every major language around the world.
- It is sung by children in every nation around the world.

Answer: What is “Jesus Loves Me”? YES.

Verse 1

Jesus loves me this I know; for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

Jesus Loves Me

- Novel “Say and Seal” by Susan Warner
- Sister Anna wrote the original poem
- Written to comfort a dying child

Those lines first appeared inside a novel called Say and Seal by Susan Warner. The author of the book, Susan Warner, asked her sister Anna to write a poem that she could use in the book. In the book, this poem was spoken to comfort a little child who was dying. The original poem includes this verse ... which is not generally published or sung:

Verse 2 (originally vs. 4)
Jesus loves me, loves me still,
Though I’m very weak and ill.
That I might from sin be free,
Bled and died upon the tree.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

- In 1862, William Bradbury put it to music
- The song includes Christ love for children

In 1862, a Christian musician named William Bradbury came across this poem. He added music and published the poem as a song. And this simple little children’s song eventually became the most famous of all the many songs he ever composed.

The song is so popular that other Religions have copied it. I came across a rendition that says, “Buddha loves me this I know, for the Dharma tells me so.” --- Well, you’d have to look long and hard at the Dharma to find evidence that Buddha loves you. But the Bible is drenched with verses that show God’s love.

Early in the 20th century, a Reporter asked the famous theologian, Karl Barth, to summarize his view of Church Doctrine. Now, Barth had completed 12 thick volumes on church doctrine, so he could have given an impressive Dissertation. He didn’t. Instead, he simply replied, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

Those simple words --- put to an uncomplicated melody --- contain the most profound truth the world will ever hear. You see, the Bible DOES tell us that Jesus loves us ... and specifically the Bible shows us that Jesus loves children. Listen to verse 2:

Verse 3 (originally vs. 2)
Jesus loves me! This I know, As he loved so long ago.
Taking children on His knee, Saying, “Let them come to Me.”

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

- Bradbury also wrote “Just as I Am” and “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand” as well as “Sweet Hour of Prayer”
- Bradbury was the first children’s pastor recorded.

Mark chapter 10 tells about a busy day for Jesus and his disciples when people tried to bring some Children to Jesus so he could bless them. The disciples had a full schedule. They didn’t have time for these bothersome little kids, and they told the parents so. Mark 10:14-16 says When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

You don’t hear about Jesus being angry very often, but when his disciples tried to send the children away, Jesus got angry! He didn’t consider little ones to be a waste of his precious time. Jesus valued children. And he made sure his Disciples got that message ... loud and clear. Can you imagine what it was like for those children to have Jesus put his hand on them and bless them? Jesus loved those little ones. And He loves the little ones that are here in our Church today.

That’s why we put value on Children here at EASTGATE. Our Children’s and Youth Ministries are not sidelines ... they are at the heart of our church. That’s the way it was for William Bradbury, who wrote the music for Jesus Loves Me back in the 1800’s. In fact, Bradbury was a pioneer in ministry to children.

William Bradbury loved music all his life. When he was a teenager, he saw his first organ ... and just 4 years later, he was making a living as a church organist. Bradbury went on to teach music in Boston, Brooklyn, and in New York City. He was instrumental in getting the public schools of New York to include Music Studies as part of their curriculum. (If it weren’t for Bradbury’s influence, your kids might not have the chance to be in Band or Choir in school.) Later in his life, Bradbury and his brother started a company that produced Bradbury pianos, which were especially designed to be used in homes. The Bradbury pianos are considered high quality instruments. They were produced for over 100 years --- and you could still buy a used Bradbury if you want to.

William Bradbury was also an excellent composer ... who wrote melodies that were simple and natural. Besides Jesus Loves Me, Bradbury composed 100’s of other hymns and published over 50 song books. You may be familiar with some of his hymns, like; He Leadeth Me, Just as I Am, Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us, The Solid Rock, and Sweet Hour of Prayer.

Bradbury was the first church composer to focus his talents on creating children’s music. You could say he was a Children’s Minister before being a Children’s Minister was cool... For several years during the mid 1800’s he held what were called “Juvenile Musical Festivals” at the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City. At these festivals, thousands of children sang songs of praise that Bradbury wrote to fit their young voices. Here’s a description of one of these events.

"A thousand children were seated on a gradually rising platform, which spread the scene most gracefully before the eye. The girls were dressed in white with a white wreath and blue sash. The boys were dressed in jackets with collars turned over in the Byron style. When all were ready, a chord was struck on the piano. A thousand children instantly arose, presenting a sight both graceful and inspiring. The musical effect produced by such a chorus was beyond description." (William B. Bradbury Composer of Hymns by Jacob Henry Hall)

Verse 4 (originally vs. 5)

Jesus loves me! He who died; Heaven’s gate to open wide.
He will wash away my sin; Let His little child come in.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

Matthew 18 records a time when Jesus' disciples asked him, "Who is going to be the greatest in your Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a little child over ... (Notice that children were often hanging around ... near Jesus.)

Jesus told his followers, "Unless you become like a little child, you can never even get INTO the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who is like a child will be the greatest in the Kingdom." Matthew 18:

What was Jesus talking about? What do children have that Adults are lacking? Obviously He wasn't talking about maturity or intellect. I don't think He was talking about innocence or obedience either... (If you've taken care of pre-schoolers you know they can be pretty clever in finding ways to DIS-obey!)

I believe the quality Jesus was talking about is TRUST. Children by nature are very TRUSTING. As adults we want to depend on our own achievements. And the longer we live apart from God, the harder it is to admit we need God's Grace. On the other hand, that kind of absolute TRUST comes naturally to little children.

- Recent statistics say that over 80% of Christians make the decision to follow Christ before the age of 18. Children are a priority to Jesus, and they need to be a priority to us!

Jesus went on to tell his disciples, Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Matthew 18:5-6

Historically, the Russian Orthodox Church failed to offer education for the Children and Youth in the church. Their failure to teach the Children left a vacuum in the minds of the youth of Russia --- and Communism tried to fill that void. For that reason, I believe that the church of Russia was partly to blame for 70 years of oppression under atheistic Communism.

We don't just offer programs for our children and youth to "keep them occupied while the adults worship." Children and Youth are the heart of our church --- and they are the future of the Church.

Now, admittedly, it takes energy and patience to teach children. It takes time and money to provide for the needs of young people. But it's worth whatever it takes!

When I see little ones running around, I don't see little "rug rats," (...as I've heard some people call them ... nobody around here of course!) When I see kids running around our church, I see the ones who are Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. I'm proud of our children and youth here at EASTGATE. While we are teaching them, we can learn a lot from them.

Verse 5 (originally vs. 6)

Jesus loves me! He will stay,
Close beside me all the way.
Thou hast bled and died for me,
I will henceforth live for Thee.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

OKAY... we've established the fact that Jesus loves us.... Now what?

What are we going to do with this love that God has for us? The word 'neighbor' is used 157 times in the Bible. Many of these references are there to give us instruction into how to deal with our neighbors.

Consider these:

Mt. 22: 36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Ps. 15:1-3

"LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? 'He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellow-man.'"

Prov. 14: 21

"He who despises his neighbor sins."

Do you remember this as a kid? (video of Mr. Rogers)

A plain sweater, white canvass sneakers, a warm smile and a simple song welcomed us every day to Mr. Rogers Neighborhood and Fred Rogers became a PBS legend. A few months ago Fred Rogers passed away but his work will live on because he did his best to be the kind of person that every child would want for their neighbor. As a child I watched Mr. Rogers and as a parent I watched it again. Over the years not much changed with the show; it was the same house, the same trolley to take you to a world of make believe, the same puppets [King Friday the 13th] and the same opening song. Every episode Mr. Rogers always asked the same question in his song: "Would you like to be my neighbor?"

It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood,
A beautiful day for a neighbor,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?

It's a neighborly day in this beautywood,
A neighborly day for a beauty,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?

I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you,
I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you.

So let's make the most of this beautiful day,
Since we're together, we might as well say,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?
Won't you be my neighbor?

Won't you please,
Won't you please,
Please won't you be my neighbor?

Even as Jesus loves the children, and knowing that we are His Children.... How many of you would say you are His child?.... therefore, we must love others. We need to love as Jesus loves.

Illustration: One evening while appearing on CNN's Larry King Live, **Jack Kemp**, the honorable congressman from New York, made an insightful comment about the religious right when he said, **"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!"** A book about how to overcome fears of and anger for the reactionary religious right, would be incomplete without a description of Paul's teachings on love in I Corinthians 13.

Many people seem to fear God in an unhealthy way. Perhaps, they really do not know that God allows things to come into our lives for their best interests. When people really know the Lord, they understand that He allows hardships for their good so that He can give the treatment we need. He wants us to become more like Jesus. His ways are higher than our ways and His thought are higher than our thoughts. He works in ways we cannot see. Jeremiah 29:11 says,

"I know the plans that I have for you. Plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a great future and hope!" God does not delight when we are trembling in our boots at the thought of having to approach Him. Instead, He wants us to reverently respect Him, love Him and follow Him as our caring Shepherd. He knows how to lead us through any wilderness experience. Only love helps us overcome the enemy within our own sinful nature.

The day in which we now live, there are many people who are hurting and need to be loved. Many of them are not getting love from their families. Many are not getting love and respect from their fellow workers. The love that some give is often times adulterated and un-clean. What everyone truly desires is True Love.... And that kind of love, called Agape Love, can only come from God. And... as His children, we must show them that love of Christ!

- **They will know we are Christians by our love.**
- **We Need to stop Talking about the Love of Jesus and start Living the Love Jesus.**
- **If my communication is not backed up by love in action, I'M A NOISEMAKER!**
- **How much do you love your neighbor?**

Sing... "Like a good neighbor.... State Farm is there."

Can you replace "State Farm" with your name? Will you be there?

Do you have unconditional love, that comes from God, for your neighbor?

- **So.... What does it mean to love my neighbor?**
- **Loving Your Neighbor is Radical!**

If I say I love chocolate and then I tell you I love my wife, you would understand that those are not the same types of love.

In the Greek language, however, there are 4 words that are used that the English language would translate as love, but they carry different meanings.

“Philia” – Brotherly Love

First we have the word “philia” That is where we get the word Philadelphia which is known as the city of “brotherly love”. “Philia” is a love that friends would have for one another. It means to have affection for. It is something that most human being experience in their lives. They have friends that they love, in a friend manner. This is not a radical love. Many people, Christians or non Christians experience this type of love.

Two other words in Greek that are used to describe love, but are not found in the Bible are...

Storge (store gay)– Familial Love

This is a familial type of love. It is strong, like the love of a mother for a child. This is not a radical love either because most people who have ever had children experience this type of love.

Eros – Romantic love

A third Greek word that can be translated love is eros. This is a romantic, passionate type of love. This too can be strong, but this is not a radical type of love.

Agape – Unconditional, selfless, love

The last Greek word that is translated love is used in the Bible it is Agape. This is an unconditional, selfless love like God has for us. This is the love that God wants us to have for others.

Jesus tells us in...

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The Greek word used in this passage is agape. This is a radical love. This is not a suggestion, it is a command. Jesus says a new command I give you. Jesus shows us just how radical this love is when he showed his love by dying on the cross when we didn't deserve it...

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This is challenging because it calls us to love when there is every reason not to love.

Why is it hard to love your neighbor?

Have you ever hid from a neighbor? Why? Why is it hard to love our neighbors?

1. Because they are different.

Different in the fact that they don't do things the same way we do. You like your yard nice and neat, they like theirs sloppy. Or, you like Christmas lights on your house and they don't.

2. Because they are weird.

To put it simply... they are just strange people! You wonder if they came from some other planet or something! You look at their lifestyles and think there is no way you'd ever act like that.

3. Because they have hurt you.

It's hard to love people who have hurt us. It's often easier to love someone you don't know as opposed to loving someone you do know. Loving the ones who hurt you takes a lot more focus, diligence, forgiveness, etc.

4. Because they are high maintenance.

Every time you get around them, they talk your ear off; or possibly they put you to work helping them out to do something. You don't want to be around them because they'll monopolize your time and energy.

5. Because they take time.

It takes time to get to know your neighbors, to find out their needs blessings. It takes time to get to know them and you don't want to spend that kind of time. When you get home from work the last thing you want to do is spend time with your neighbors! So, you go inside, draw the curtains and pretend you're not there!

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR EXAM

Keep in mind.....

Be honest. No exam you take in life will do you any good unless you tell the truth. I can remember as a kid trying to cheat on the eye exam because I thought glasses were cool! If you cheat, you won't have a true estimation of where you are.

This is not to make you feel guilty or condemned. Condemnation does not come from God, but conviction does. If you feel condemned, don't receive it. If you feel convicted to do more.... Than accept it.

You are not exempt from this exam. None of us here today are exempt from the exam of life in how much we love our neighbors. I may think that just because I'm a pastor here at EASTGATE I don't have to take this test.... I do. God will EXAM all of us someday as we stand before Him. We are all going to be held accountable for how much we loved people. You're not too young, too old, too smart, too not smart, too godly, too ungodly, nothing.... We're not exempt from this exam of love.

Name: _____

Matthew 22:37-39 He replied to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

SECTION ONE: NAMES

(Write down the names that come to your mind first.)

1. What are the names of your neighbors on the left and right side of your house?
2. What are the names of 2 other people that you work with?
3. What is the name of at least one worker in a place you shop for gas/food/etc.?
4. What is the name of at least one server in your favorite restaurant?
5. What is the name of the pastor in the local church closest to your house?

SECTION TWO: HOW MANY TIMES?

(Place a check mark in the correct answer space that best applies)

1. How many times have you provided a meal for someone else in 2009?
 0 Times At least Once 2 – 5 Times More Than 5 Times
2. How many times have you given someone money to help them out in 2009 not expecting to be paid back?
 0 Times At least Once 2 – 5 Times More Than 5 Times
3. How many times did you do something like raking leaves, shoveling snow, cleaning gutters, painting, picking up sticks, help unload groceries or anything else that would relate to some type of help around the outside of your neighbor’s house in 2009?
 0 Times At least Once 2 – 5 Times More Than 5 Times
4. How many times did you give a server at your favorite restaurant a tip more than 50 percent of the total bill in 2009?
 0 Times At least Once 2 – 5 Times More Than 5 Times
5. How many times have you attended one of the Monthly All Church outreaches provided by EASTGATE to serve local neighborhoods in 2009?
 0 Times At least Once 2 – 5 Times More Than 5 Times

SECTION THREE: HOW PASSIONATELY DO YOU WANT TO?

(Put a check mark next to the phrase that best describes your desire level with the following questions)

1. How passionately do you want to pick up the garbage in the bathroom at your neighborhood restaurant or places you most frequently visit, i.e. theaters, mall, etc.?
 Really Passionately Pretty Passionately Fairly Passionately Not Passionately at All
2. How passionately do you want to introduce yourself to the neighbors you don't yet know in your local neighborhood?
 Really Passionately Pretty Passionately Fairly Passionately Not Passionately at All
3. How passionately do you want to tell your neighbors about Eastgate Community Church?
 Really Passionately Pretty Passionately Fairly Passionately Not Passionately at All
4. How passionately do you want to volunteer at one of the neighborhood civil organizations? (i.e. hospital, schools, fire, police, rest homes, etc.)
 Really Passionately Pretty Passionately Fairly Passionately Not Passionately at All
5. How passionately do you want to go to your neighbors and ask them if there is anything you can do for them right now and actually be prepared to do it right now?
 Really Passionately Pretty Passionately Fairly Passionately Not Passionately at All

SECTION FOUR: HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW?

After taking this exam, how do you feel now in regards to how much you really love your neighbor?

(Place a check mark next to the phrase that best describes your feelings)

I feel **great**. I feel like I am really being an example of the love of Christ to my neighbors. There's no way I could possibly do anymore; but I'll try.

I feel **really good**. I feel like I'm really trying hard to love my neighbors and can see now that I have made a real IMPACT in their lives and will continue to work on it.

I feel **okay**. Sure, I've got a long ways to go, but I feel good as to where I am right now in loving my neighbors.

I feel **horrible**. Wow...I'm really not doing much at all in regards to truly loving my neighbors in practical ways. I've done a bit, but I've got a long ways to go.

I feel **like scum**. I'm doing nothing and know I'm doing nothing. Sure, I love them, kind of, but I'm doing anything in any practical way to show them that love. "Lord help me!"

Conclusion:

We need more of God's Love! We need His Presence and we need His Love. And then, we must take His Presence and His Love and share it with our neighbors! It's not an option.

And as we do.... You watch... you wait... you'll see!

And now.... The ending song of Mr. Rogers Neighborhood, "It's Such a Good Feeling"

**It's a good feeling
Such a happy feeling**

**It's such a good feeling to know you're alive.
It's such a happy feeling
You're growing inside.
And when you wake up ready to say
I think I'll make a snappy new day
It's such a good feeling,
A very good feeling,
The feeling you know that we're friends.**

**It's a good feeling
It's a happy feeling**

**It's such a good feeling
To know you're in tune.
It's such a happy feeling to find you're in bloom
And when you wake up ready to say
I think I'll make a snappy new day.
It's such a good feeling,
A very good feeling,
The feeling you know that we're friends.**

**And I'll be back
When the day is new
And I'll have more ideas for you.
And you'll have things you'll want to talk about.
I will too.**

EXTRA NOETES ON LOVE

From the following list, try to note the comparisons and contrasts of love that apply to your relationships according to 1 Corinthians 13 – known as “The Love Chapter”.

WHAT LOVE IS versus WHAT LOVE IS NOT

1. Love is Long Suffering – Love is an uncommon force that copes with suffering. By enduring the pain, sorrow and anger we are exhibiting God’s unconditional love. People who are mature in love endure the pain of selfish, critical and immature scoffers.

1. Love is not in a Hurry - Love’s long suffering or patience does not accept evil or adopt an attitude of resignation that becomes fatalistic. Love is not blind to abuse, sin, or ignorance, but knows how to speak the truth with a love that accomplishes God’s purposes. Love does not naively accept suffering without finding out the lessons that God wants us to learn through our adversity. Love is not judgmental in rushing to criticize someone based upon your own set of assumptions and expectations.

2. Love is Kind – Love is considerate, benevolent, and gentle to people. Love is kind even to the unkind. Kindness freely accepts another and seeks their good regardless of what one can get in return. Kindness even dares to be weak by identifying with people in their pain, problems and weaknesses. Kindness looks for a way to enhance, heal, and help people regardless of who they are.

Kindness is not gushy, but is intelligent and tough when necessary. Kindness works with wisdom in a structure of justice and fairness according to the given realities. Kindness encourages the faint hearted, helps the weak, and is patient with everyone. Kindness looks for a way of being constructive in every situation. Kindness is gentle even to those who are harsh and unsympathetic. Kindness knows how to speak in healing voice tones.

2. Love is not Mean or Apathetic - Love’s kindness is not weakness in the face of overwhelming difficulties. It does not give in when pressured. This kindness is not naïve or gullible accepting whatever anyone says. Kindness does not take the attitude that one must be kind just to maintain relationships. Love’s kindness does not sacrifice essential ethical principles. Kindness is not sentimentality that only with one’s emotions.

Kindness is not ashamed to weep with those who weep or rejoice with those who rejoice. Kindness is not content with those who say, “Let’s avoid any kind of controversy and go along for the sake of harmony. Kindness is not selfish with a motive that expects favors in return. Kindness is not unwilling to dish out tough discipline if it is the best way to bring about healing and maturity. Kindness does condemn others because of one’s own moral code.

3. Love is a Commitment to God and His People – An unconditional love pledges its loyalty, devotion and allegiance to be faithful and true. Love does not vary with the wind of circumstances, moods, or difficulties. Love is faithfully serves in good times and bad times. Love restricts its own actions to not hinder the fulfilling of one’s stated commitments. Love’s commitment seeks to involve people according to their level of maturity and desire. Commitment overcomes feelings of irritation because of a deeper sense of loyalty to a person and their shared goals.

3. Love is not Jealous – Jealousy is a fear of losing someone or something. You know someone is jealous when they are afraid of losing their “rights”. A jealous person is suspicious of others for fear they may take away something important. Jealous people are intolerant of anyone who seems to be disloyal to one’s supposed allegiances. A jealous person is watchful for anyone or anything that might be a rival.

4. Love is Poised – Love is balanced. Love is not proud. Love is not shy. Love gives a person a healthy self-esteem. Love has the ability to keep things in perspective. Love does not let the microscopic or the macroscopic issues overshadow one another. Love knows when to stand firm and when to be flexible. Love is balanced. Love is able to say “No” because a request does not fit into one’s God given purpose. Love has discernment in understanding the cause and effect of each difficulty. Love is humble enough to seek godly counsel on important decisions. Love knows how to relate its strengths to others in ways that brings blessings to all.

4. Love is Not Boastful or Arrogant – Love does not demand its own way, its own rights or its own cultural expectations. Love is not overbearing and proud. Love recognizes that freely we have received from God, therefore, freely we should give. Love does not look for ways to grab power, control and authority. Love is not eager to advance one’s position. Love does not lord one’s power over people for the sake of demonstrating authority. Love is not obsessed with control. Love does not try to look good to try to impress others. Love is not rude. Love does not put people in order to look good. Love is not so proud as to admit one’s shortcomings, deficiencies or sins.

5. Love is Unselfish – Love seeks God’s plans in order to accomplish all aspects of God’s will. Love is willing to sacrifice one’s right, desires and human expectations for the sake of His Kingdom and His righteousness. Love is an unselfish concern that freely seeks others’ good. Love is the power that moves us to serve others regardless of whether they can reciprocate. Love resists the human tendency to seek everything that would be pleasing to one’s individual desires. Love recognizes the emptiness of self-love without the love of Christ. Love goes beyond a self-centered perspective to appreciate the concerns of others and empathize with their pain. Love is willing to deny one’s selfish interests in carrying our cross. Love follows the footprints of Jesus.

5. Love Does not Seek Its Own Rights – Love waits for God to graciously give each person what they need according to His plans, processes and powers. Love prompts us to forgo one’s claim to human rights. Love is willing to pass up one’s chances for success for God’s greater will. Love knows the best ways and occasions to seek justice for the greater good of God’s people and purposes. Love knows the best ways to see God’s will done with the gifts, abilities and resources He has entrusted to our care. Love knows the best way to teach truth in a way that others will understand. Love does not try to force other people to surrender their rights, but leaves that job to the convicting of the Holy Spirit.

Love does not sacrifice human rights for the sake of maintaining one’s standing or position. Love knows the best way, time and method to surrender one’s rights. Love knows the best ways to exercise God’s self-denying love that will work in harmony with justice, truth and grace.

6. Love is Self-Sacrificing – Love is willing to take up one’s own cross daily and follow Christ in all aspects of life. Love is the power that moves us to seek others and their best interests. Love for oneself is not masochistic, but seeks to develop Christ in our thinking, attitudes, and actions. Love for one’s self seeks to develop all of God’s given potentials within the parameters of His will. The goal of love is to work toward the complete transformation of our mind, will and emotions into the image of Christ. In essence, love says, “Father in heaven. Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come in qualitative and quantitative ways. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

6. Love Does Not Seek Its Own Self- Love is not interested in building one’s own kingdom and standards for righteousness. Love does not put selfish ambitions above the love toward God and one’s neighbors. Love does not set up self-development as an idol. Love does not idolize success. Love does not try to take away individual freedom. Love does not expend its energies for one’s own self-aggrandizement. Love does not denigrate one’s abilities, physical characteristics or weaknesses. Love does not give into depression when others encourage self-pity or feelings of victimization.

Love does not try to accomplish God’s will through human rules, regulations and processes. Love is not so critical that a person despairs of trying to progress toward maturity. Love is not condemning of others efforts to improve themselves in a way that the Holy Spirit leads.

7. Love is Calm – One who loves is able to rest in the love of God knowing that all is well. Love enables one to be tranquil, peaceful, and serene in the knowledge that God is in the heavens and He will do whatever He pleases. Love does not get agitated when it is provoked. Love follows the proverb, “A harsh word stirs up anger, but a soft answer turns away wrath.” (Proverbs 15:1) Love helps a person remain confident in the face of overwhelming odds. Love rests assured in the power of God’s love to overcome any difficulty. .

Love overlooks another’s fault. Love meets our deepest needs so we do not give into the temptations. Love allows us to speak in a calm tone of voice that communicates power under control. Love reduces frustration because the one who loves has the serenity to accept the things he cannot change, the courage to change the things he can and the wisdom to know the difference. Love increases our gratitude to God for everything we have. Love appreciates the terrible problems we have escaped through His grace. Love overlooks a fault and does not hold grudges. Love turns feelings of hurt, anger and fear over to the Lord.

7. Love is Not Irritable – Love is not easily annoyed. Love is not overly sensitive. Love does not quickly take offense. Love does not return evil for evil. Love does not look at interruptions as a nuisance as much as an opportunity to serve. Love does not let little things irritate one emotionally to a point of losing one’s balanced perspective. Love does not let anger cloud one’s sense of judgment.

Love does not let anger control their reactions when they are tired, discouraged or pressured. Love does not give in to feelings of fear, threats or intimidation. Love is not upset when a personal right seems to be taken away. Love does not act out of hostility or angry aggression. . Love does not try to justify oneself in the eyes of others. Love does not let one’s frustrations result in efforts to vindicate ourselves. Love does not try to disguise its irritability with silence and pouting. Love is not resentful about something that could have worked out but didn’t. Love does not let grumblers, complainers or cynics turn one into a sullen person. Love is not incessantly pessimistic. Love does not let anger cloud the lens of our perspectives.

8. Love hates Evil – Love hates sin while continuing to love the sinner. Love dislikes anything that happens to hurt people needlessly. Love equally abhors moral, social, physical, emotional, economic and spiritual evil. Love recognizes that evil is caused by the sin in the world, human sinful natures and the devil. Love recognizes that a strong love for God is the best remedy for loving the world. Love recognizes that worshipping anything less than God is idolatry. Love recognizes that rejoicing in other peoples’ sin is a subtle expression of self-righteousness. Love only rejoices when evil is destroyed. Love has eyes to apply the healing of God’s care. Love demonstrates a confident security in difficulties because one’s life is focused on the eternal and that which cannot be taken away. Love put God’s kingdom and purposes as the priority.

8. Love does not take delight in sordid sin – Love does not relish in other people’s downfalls, sexual indiscretions or human failings. Love may regret evil but it does not rejoice in what trouble evil has caused around the world. Love does not become happy when an opponent suffers the consequences of sin. Love does not philosophically accept that evil is necessary in order for people to appreciate God’s goodness. Love does not have to understand all of the aspects of evil before resisting it. Love is not content with worshipping anything less the Holy Father, Holy Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. Love does not delight when one’s enemies fall. Love does not try to mask its delight in evil by pretending to be disgusted, nauseated, or indignant at evil. Love does not delight when disaster befalls a competitor or a neighbor that seemed unfriendly.

9. Love Rejoices with the Truth – Love rejoices when truth is taught and expressed in a way that reflects the person of Jesus Christ. Love gives joy when truth is the determiner of people’s decisions. Love celebrates whenever truth wins out over distortions of truth. Love recognizes truth as its favorite companion otherwise it would merely become a warm fuzzy affection. Love rejoices with truth because love widens the scope of truth’s’ lens to include the whole person. Love favors truth because it keeps one honest and complete.

Love rejoices in truth because it gives one a balanced look. Love values truth because it supercedes all

philosophies with the truth of God's word. Love values truth because it recognizes that in Christ's love dwells the secrets of all wisdom and knowledge. Love rejoices in truth because it can reflect more of the whole attributes of the God, the Father of law, the Son of love and the Holy Spirit of liberty. Love opens our minds to God's truth.

9. Love Does not Rejoice in Success That is not Based in Truth – Love does not rejoice in affections not based on truth. Love does not embrace values that are rooted in traditions, human standards, or “spiritual” experiences. Love does not become gushy and enamored with someone unless they know that their relationship is rooted in truth. Love does not ignore truth regardless of how strong one's feelings are toward a person, a project or an ideal. Love does not let other priorities push truth to the background. Love does not ignore truth because it helps keep everything in proper perspective.

Love is not based on favoritism of a tribe, a country, or a certain personality type. Love's truth sees the bigger picture of the whole of humanity. Love does not look down on people who do not appreciate the fact that all truth is God's truth. Love is satisfied with the truth found in Jesus Christ and the word of God.

10. Love Bears All Things – Love knows no limit to its endurance. It perseveres under the most difficult of physical, emotional and mental suffering. Love is willing to be strong under pressures to give in to worldly standards or urgings from colleagues. Love carries the weight of peoples' burdens without feeling used. Love carries personal burdens without murmuring or complaining. Love is willing to help bear the pain of another.

10. Love Does Not Complain About Everything - Love is not a squeaky wheel always trying to nag people into getting what they want. Love does not pester people into giving them what they want. Love is not overly sensitive to off handed remarks. Love is not quick to take offense by others' actions, gestures, or words. Love is not quick to find fault in something or someone because things are not perfect.

11. Love Covers For Another – Love is willing to overlook a fault for the sake of a relationship. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love is willing to be quiet about others shortcomings for the sake of helping to save another's dignity and reputation. Love hates scandal as it knows that no one really wins in the end. Love hates everything that hurts people needlessly. A loving person is actually turned off by gossip. Love is actually hurt by public disclosure of rampant sin. Love covers up for other's weaknesses for the sake of healing. Love knows the right limits to covering for another when a person needs to accept the consequences of their problems. Love is willing to take some of the sting of a conflict without wanting to seek vengeance.

11. Love Does Not Excuse People for Habitual Sin - Love does not excuse people for sins that they are obviously not willing to deal with. Love is not so tolerant as to compromise Biblical values. Love is not so humanistic that it puts a person's friendship before their Spirit lead conscience. Love does not encourage whimpering about a problem. Love does not accept silly evasions of serious problems. Love is wise enough to know when to present someone with the truth. Love knows that truth ultimately sets people free from the burdens of their sins. Love has a way of not being self-righteous in the speaking of truth. Love does not look down at someone for a shortcoming.

12. Love Directs Others Toward Good Things – Love takes people to a higher level of maturity. Love is able to gently turn people in the direction where they will receive the most good. Love is able to keep a society living according to a righteous standard rather than allow it to sink to the lowest common moral denominator. Love keeps groups from coming apart due to conflicts or differences of opinions. Love is able to help people collectively reach for the greater good of us all.

12. Love Does Not Let Individualism Forget Our Responsibility to Society – Love does not let each individual's desires splinter the society into tiny islands disconnected from one another. Love does not focus on individual responsibilities as our only concern. Love does not neglect the needy, the hurting and those who cannot help themselves. Love is not cold and uncaring to see justice done for those less fortunate.

13. Love Uses Power for the Good – Love uses whatever power it has to benefit others. Love sees power as a gift from God to be used for His purposes. Love respects power only as it is understood to be on loan from God. Love uses challenges as opportunities to demonstrate one's reliance and submission to God's authority. Love is able to use one's God given power to faithfully exercise one's responsibilities. Love has the power to endure criticism because God's power is greater than any human attack. Love rests in the fact that God's is the ultimate power, authority, and controller of all things.

13. Love Does not Use Power for Selfish Ends – Love does not insist that the ends justifies the means. Love does not grab for power without thought for the consequences. Love does not seek power for its own sake. Love does not let jealousy dominate one's feelings. Love does not get bent out of shape when it sees power being abused because it knows that God is still reigning over all. Love is not dismayed when people corruptly use their power. Love does not give into acts of deceit, malice or intrigue because it recognizes God's power to make all things right.

14. Love Believes All Things – This is not to say that one who loves is gullible. Instead, love is willing to give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Love knows no limit to what it believes God can do. Love has an unshakable confidence in what the Lord can do in bringing about change in people, situations, or nations. Love is almost generous to a fault in helping others. Love is so willing to trust the Lord that unless the Lord acts, one is in trouble. Love has such great faith in God and His word that no adversity shakes one's sense of security. Love is the deepest reason to believe God. Love is the power to believe in more than what is provided in human evidence.

14. Love Is Not Gullible – Love is not naïve. It does not believe whatever anybody suggests. Love is not cynical, suspecting everyone of being untrustworthy. Love is not too cautious as to fail to take advantage of God sent opportunities. Love does not worry so much about being cheated because it recognizes God's sovereign power to make things right in the end. Love does not zero in on a person's weakness, but tries to look at the part of the glass that is full of good things rather than the part that is empty. Love does not believe in every like gossip, story, or spin. Love is not ready to believe in the things that are not Biblically based. Love does not turn its head away from facts.

15. Love Hopes All Things – Love is the power to expect that God will fulfill the desires of those who fear Him. Love gives us the assurance that no matter what happens, God still causes all things to work together for good as we love God and are fitting into His plans. Love saves one from drifting into despair, dismay or depression. Love is the fulfillment of our deepest desires for what is best. Love prevails against all odds. Love is unending in its bounteous optimism.

Love hopes for a better change regardless of the outward circumstances. Love keeps the flame of hope eternally burning bright in our hearts and minds. Love is a desire that wills good things into being. Love is certain that God and His word will never fail. Love sanitizes our expectations to be pleasing to God in all respects. Love focuses our hope in Christ. Love sees possibilities that apathy and indifference is blind to. Love constantly looks for new ways to see Christ and His kingdom enlarged in quantitative and qualitative ways!

15. Love is Not Hopeless – Love knows no limits to its hope. Love does not fade away with time, but grows stronger and stronger. Love does not give in to the desires to quit and settle for an easier way. Love resists the temptation to give in to cynicism, skepticism and despair. Love does not let other things replace one's greatest hope found in Christ. Love does not just hope for survival, but for what God wants accomplished.

Love does not give into to feelings of hopelessness in the news. Love does not surrender to cynics who would wish company in their misery. Love does not grown complacent, but always hopes for improvements. Love does not grow sullen through the disappointments of life. Love does not grow cranky in old age. Love does not become presumptuous about other's motives. Love does not assume the worst. Love does not have any elements of hubris. Love is not patronizing. Love does not cease growing in Christ-likeness.

16. Love Endures All Things – Love knows no limit to its endurance. Love is the power to persevere through the most difficult of situations. Love contains the ingredients of patience, forbearance, and fortitude that allow one to sail through any circumstance. Love is the ability to see some joy, benefit, and positive outcome out of the most troubling hardships. Love relies on God and His word to produce a greater measure of endurance through His enabling grace. Love is the power to see good in every difficulty.

Love has the capacity to endure persecution, problems, and evil attacks through the power of Christ. Love has the power to endure separation from loved ones. Love learns to do without many things. Love is the power to follow in the footprints of Jesus who endured the cross for sinful human beings. Perfect love casts out fear. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

16. Love Does Not Give In - Love does not give into evil desires, temptations or devilish forces. Love does not give in to doubt, despair, or depression when the going gets tough. Love does not surrender to family pressures to find quick solutions to difficult problems. Love does not give in to corrupt authorities when they demand compliance. Love does not act out a stubborn belligerent attitude. Love does not surrender to achieve peace at any price. Love does not give in to a maintenance mentality.

Love does not give in to an attitude of just trying to get by with the minimum effort. Love does not give into conformity to the world and its lax attitudes. Love does not surrender to feelings of revenge. Love does not give into the passions of the moment. Love does not just cruise to the end of life with a resigning attitude of “that’s just the way things are.”

Love does not take one’s focus off of Christ during hard times.

17. Love Never Fails – God’s love in us cannot die because He is eternal. Love cannot fail because God’s sovereign power, knowledge and grace super-intends everything for His best interests. Love is self-generating through the power of the Holy Spirit and the scriptures. Love continues into eternity. Love never demands proof of our secure future, but is certain of God’s rewards. All gifts but love are temporary. Every service done without God’s love working through us is done for mere earthly gain. Love is a gift that God gives us so that we can continually give to others.

Love is the highest evidence of our maturity in Christ. Love is the most long lasting element of our existence. Love looks for people that it can give itself to. When everything of seeming consequence has ended, love will outlast it.

True perfection is found in the one that loved us enough to die on the cross to pay for the penalty of our sins – Jesus Christ.

17. Love Does not Burn Out – Love does not wax and wane with circumstances because it is not dependent on human strength. Love does not sputter in the face of opposition. Love does not grow weary in well doing because it knows that in due season we will reap if we faint not. Love does not give in to comparisons with others that are less mature.

Love never grows old and tired. Erotic, family and friendship loves will cease. God’s agape – unconditional love will never end. Love is not based on human emotions or perceptions. Love is not culturally conditioned. Love is not a gift belonging to any one group of people, any selected spiritual gifts, or any race more effectively than others. Love is not gender related. Whatever service or obedience we render, if love is withheld, the law is not fulfilled. Love is not just shown through humanitarian efforts. Love is not limited by our earthly existence.