

Love One Another - Presented by long-time Grace Member, Ron Gannon.

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[0 : 00] Well, this morning I'm going to be talking again.

I believe I started a study there last fall, and I said I've been doing a study on the book of Proverbs. This is a great book. It has a lot of quick sayings, and it's got a lot of meat in there for us to live our Christian life by.

So I wanted to do that study. Marv has said that he needs somebody to fill in for him when he goes. He is retired. Basically, he is retired, and he said he was retired, but we're grateful that he came back.

But we want to give him every opportunity that he has to travel when he wants to travel. So I said I would start a study in Proverbs, and what's great about the book of Proverbs is you can jump in just about any place.

And you can have a great study in the book of Proverbs. So that's what I've done, and I'm going to continue that study today. My goal in this study is to distinguish between having information and having wisdom, and that's the main goal.

[1 : 12] I say this the last time that many people relate wisdom to knowledge and information or information. The more we have, the wiser we are. But my question then was, is that so?

Is that the way wisdom comes about, by having more knowledge? What's its main emphasis for wisdom seems to be accumulated learning or knowledge.

This is true, but I believe wisdom is far more than an accumulated wisdom and knowledge. It's being able to use correctly the information that you gain from the information.

So information is not enough. I go to London, to the London Prison Farm, and I'm entering one of the prisoners there. And this is a great example of having all kinds of information, but not having the wisdom that comes with that information.

This man, this is his fifth time around. So just about his whole life, he's been in prison. He started this prison experience when he was about 14 years old.

[2 : 20] The man is now about 46 or 47 years old. So this is his fifth time that he's been down. This man says, I know the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my Savior. He can quote scriptures from any place in the Bible, from the Old Testament, from the New Testament. Sometimes when we're there and we're having a study, he'll tell me, well, you misquoted that.

And we'll go and we'll find out, yeah, matter of fact, I did misquote it. But this man knows the scriptures in and out. But yet this man has so much trouble having a life, a godly life, because the information that he has, he's got it here.

Oh, he's got all kinds of information up here. The man can go on and on and on. But you've got to take this information from here and you've got to put it here. And this is where the wisdom comes in. When we take the information we have, we get it down into our heart. And when we get it down there, then we can start living it out in a day-to-day basis. And that's when we see wisdom coming out in people, especially in Christians.

[3 : 37] And we don't expect too much of that when we're talking about the worldly people, because they are living out what comes natural to them. But for the Christian, we need to be living out God's principles.

And until we have the wisdom to handle God's Word, then we're going to have a life that's pretty much just like it was before we accepted Jesus Christ.

And when all of us, when we accept Jesus into our life, we have a change that comes over us. I know I did. When I accepted the Lord over 40 years ago, something came into my life.

But it wasn't like I'd heard. It wasn't, you know, I've heard many testimonies before. I accepted the Lord. And a lot of these testimonies said, man, I accepted the Lord.

And the next day, I was on the street preaching and witnessing to other people. Well, my friends, when I was saved, I had a change in my life.

[4 : 33] I knew something different was there. But my life didn't change all that much right off the bat. A lot of my old friends, they would have said, hey, Ron's no different today than he was yesterday.

What's different? Okay, I knew something was different. But over the years, and I think God uses us. He trains us. He disciplines us.

And we've become more and more knowledgeable of His Word. And we get to be able to take that knowledge from up here and get it down here into our heart. And that's where it counts. Sometimes, that's where we see changes.

And just like me, I had many friends I had. And as over the years, some of those friends just started disappearing. Because some of them, as I would talk about my experience, didn't want to hear that. And they just kind of drifted off. And others, I just kind of drifted away from them. So I think over the years, you do change. And the wisdom comes with that. And like this man there in London.

[5 : 35] A lot of these men, when they get out of prison, where do they go? They go right back to their friends. They go right back to the street where they came from. It's so easy for them to come back to the same old things that they've had their whole life.

The same lifestyle. The same friends. So the knowledge that they do have, that they gain from reading the Bible. And believe me, these men in the prison, they do read the Word.

There's a lot of people in there that's reading the Word on a daily basis. They know their Bible. Why not? They've got a lot of time on their hands. They can sit there. They can read all day long.

And it's great with all the missions and the organizations that go into the prisons and hand out Bibles. So these men can have those. And I know that there's a lot of men there today who are accepting the Lord as their Savior.

And when they come out, they're going to be able to take that information they have, transfer it from the mind to the heart, and they're going to live lives. But they're going to change because of that heart knowledge that they have, that wisdom that they have.

[6 : 42] They'll be able to go out and they'll be able to change their location where they're at. They'll be able to change their friends. They have a new concept of what this world is all about. And it's from the Word of God. And that's where the things are going to change.

So again, I want us to leave here this morning knowing that wisdom is something that we live every day, not something we just reserve for Sunday morning. And when we can come here Sunday morning and we can get all this information, it's great.

Bible study is great. But again, until we get that information from here down to our heart, it's not doing us too much good at all. And that's what we need to be concentrating on.

It's great to come here on Sunday morning, but it's the way we live Monday through Saturday. That counts. And that's what people are going to be looking at. So it's the Word of God is the living truth that comes into our minds, into our hearts to be seen and to be expressed in the way we live on a day-to-day basis.

And that's where people are going to say, I know you. You've changed. What is this change that makes you so different today than you was yesterday?

[7 : 51] And there is a time for you to open up. That is the time to witness. That is the time to say, this is what changed in my life. I have somebody different now that's leading my life.

I'm not trying to run my life myself. My life is Jesus Christ. And tell him or her exactly how you came to know Jesus Christ and what he's done for you. On a day-to-day basis, we can do that.

Remember the last time that we talked, we referenced the book of John. So if you would turn to the book of John, chapter 6. And it gives us a good example of people having information, but not having the wisdom to handle it correctly.

And this is one of those, the I Am messages that Jesus Christ gives.

And in John, chapter 6, starting at verse 35, Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that believes on me shall not have thirst.

[8 : 55] But I say unto you that you have seen me, and yet you do not believe. All that which the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will no wise cast out.

For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholds the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I myself will raise him up at the last day.

This sermon was so controversial that at its conclusion, many of his followers went away, and they stopped following Jesus. They said, It is not this, Jesus of Nazareth.

They knew this man. They've lived with this man. And now all of a sudden, this man is saying, the same as I am. And what did I am mean to them?

Jehovah. I am. And they couldn't take this. And of course, they stopped following him. Many of Jesus' followers at that point, they had information.

[10 : 06] Well, they had the whole Old Testament. They had all the teachings from when they were growing up and from their forefathers. They had the prophecies of things to come that spelled out just like it happened as Jesus was here on earth.

So they had the information. They just didn't get that information down to where they could use it in the right way, with wisdom. Some chose to listen and stopped listening to Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus challenged the twelve as to see if they would also walk away. And Peter wisely responded in John 68 and 69, chapter 6.

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know you that you are the holy and one God.

So the apostles, his disciples, they did follow him. All of those Jesus was teaching heard the same message. They had the same information. So what's the difference?

[11 : 12] It isn't enough simply to have the information to be educated and to have knowledge. We also need wisdom to be able to know how to enter the information that we have. So in this world flooded with confusing and contradictory information, we can, like Peter, turn to Christ for wisdom.

He cuts through the words of confusion with words of life. We need spiritual wisdom. wisdom. So, my message this morning, where can we go to find wisdom? What the Bible talks about wisdom?

It's the book of Proverbs. And as we get into the book of Proverbs, we're going to see some scriptures and some passages there that shows a lot of light on how we, as Christians, in a day-to-day basis, can show the same type of love that God shows to his chosen people to us.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of sayings intended to serve as a guide for daily life. Many of the sayings in this book were written and collected by Solomon some 950 years before Christ.

And he spoke some 3,000 Proverbs. Yes, Solomon found favor in God's sight. And we see that if we go back to the Old Testament how Solomon prayed and God came to him and said, I will bless thee.

[12 : 27] So Solomon was one of the wisest men. He had many kingdoms. He had many riches. He did a lot of things. He rebuilt the temple. Solomon used this wisdom to build a mighty kingdom and empire.

But in the end, it was tragic that Solomon didn't even obey the principles he wrote in his Proverbs. Now the Lord was angry with Solomon for turning to other gods.

He warned him that his nation would be torn away from him and his household. As we know, the nation continued to be separated until eventually God's people were held in captivity for 70 years as they go through the Old Testament.

So Solomon was a great man. Solomon had the information. He used it wisely. He built this empire. He built the temple. He did all these great things.

But something came into Solomon's life that changed. And it was temptation. And that's another subject in itself if you go on for a good time about temptation.

[13 : 37] But Solomon faced temptations just like we do today. And one of the great temptations that Solomon had was women. And it came down to the place where it was a downfall of Solomon.

Because as he took these women, he also took the gods that they worshipped. And that's what was the downfall of Solomon. When Solomon started worshipping other gods than his true and only Jehovah.

So we see that that's the downfall of Solomon. Because Proverbs are brief and graphic, they are easy to memorize, recall, and to share.

So what a great opportunity. We can memorize these short things. We can put them in our memory bank. And when we have the opportunity and something arises, we can just click it out and we can have it at our memory and at our disposal to use it.

So it's a great thing. Believers have at their disposal the wisdom they need for making right decisions day after day if we just keep in mind some of these Proverbs that we're going to be talking about.

[14:40] Wisdom for such things is acquiring and using wealth, making and keeping friends, building a happy home, avoiding temptation and trouble, controlling our feelings, controlling the tongue, well that's another thing all by itself too, controlling the tongue and building godly character.

Many people today are wizards with their higher education but these seem to be amateurs when it comes to making an accessible life for themselves and for their families.

So the book of Proverbs is about godly wisdom, how to get it and how to use it. As never before, the church needs people who understands and practices the skills involved in these Proverbs to help them build a life that's worthy.

As I stated in my introduction in this study of Proverbs, there's all kinds of Proverbs there. We're not going to go verse by verse. My intent for these Proverbs is to take it by topic and there's all kinds of topics that we could have.

We could have many weeks of speaking from the book of Proverbs. So today, I want to talk about love. That's one of the topics in Proverbs and as we read our scripture reading this morning in 1 Corinthians, we see the scripture references to love and God has a lot to say about love in His book, the Bible.

[16:09] First, let's turn to 1 John. 1 John talks about God's love. love. In chapter 4, verses 8 and 16, both state God is love.

It is not simply that God loves, but that He is love Himself. Love is not merely one of His attributes, but His very nature.

Love is the supreme quality. This agape love that we're talking about is a divine love, a self-sacrificing love. It's charity. It's unconditional.

And it's a thoughtful love. love. This love is so different because it has more to do with the will than with feelings. And I know Marv has mentioned this many times.

When you read scripture and you read words, these words, today we use one word for love. That's love. But back here in the Greek, they had at least four, maybe five words for love.

[17:15] But the love we're talking about here today is God's type of love, agape love, which is just you have to have a will for this kind of love. This is not about feelings.

I mean, so many times we feel like love and other times we just don't feel like love. So if we want to have this type of love, it can't depend on feelings. Agape love is choice.

We choose. We choose to love. And that's exactly what God has done. He has chosen to love His people. So, we need to keep that in mind.

Many of our hearts are not occupied with His wondrous love for us. The better we are acquainted with His love in His character, fullness, and blessedness, the more will our hearts be drawn to Him in love.

Our thoughts need to be formed and regulated by what is revealed in the Holy Scriptures about love. The love of God is uninfluenced. The love of God is free, it's spontaneous, it's uncaused.

[18:20] The only reason God loves any of us is found His own sovereign will. In Deuteronomy chapter 7, verses 7 and 8, you don't need to turn there, Moses said, The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people.

For you were the fewest of all people but because the Lord loved thee. Why did the Lord choose the nation of Israel? What's in the nation at that time?

But why did the Lord choose Abraham over somebody else? Just because God chose and He chose Abraham.

In 1 John 4.19 it says, We love Him because He first loved us. And that is true. God, had God loved us in return for our love towards Him, then it would not be spontaneous on His part.

But because He loved us when we were loveless, it is clear that His love was uninfluenced. No, there is nothing that you or me can do to attract the heart of God.

[19:26] Absolutely nothing. God chooses to love us. And that's the way we need to use agape love. That's the way we need to be able to handle our relationships with other people.

It's through this agape love. The love of God is also eternal. God Himself is eternal and God is love. Therefore, as God Himself had no beginning, His love had done.

In Jeremiah 31.3 it says, I have loved Thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn Thee. Just because He chose, He drew us.

Also in Ephesians 1.4, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in loving having predestined us.

God loved His people before heaven and earth were called into existence. He set His heart upon them from all eternity. God's love also lasts forever.

[20 : 27] Let's turn to Psalms 136. And when we read that we get a clear picture of this love. we see how great God's love is from nature, His gracious love in the history of Israel, and His mercy toward all.

And we're not going to read all of this, but I think you'll get a good understanding of what we're talking about here. verse 1, Give thanks to the Lord for He is good for His love and kindness is everlasting.

Verse 2, Give thanks to the God of gods for His love and kindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the Lord of lords for His love and kindness is everlasting.

Go to verse 10, To Him who swathed the Egyptians in their firstborn for His love for His love is everlasting. And brought Israel out from their midst for His love is everlasting.

To go down to verse 17, as we get further into the Old Testament, To Him who swathed great kings for His love is everlasting. Verse 20, And all king of Bishon and His love is everlasting.

[21 : 53] This is the king that His nation conquered. Verse 26, Give thanks to the God of heaven for His love and kindness is everlasting. God's love is permanent.

It's there for us all the time. God's love is also immutable. That means it's unchanging. And James 1, 17 states, As with God Himself, there is no variation or shifting shadow.

So His love knows neither change nor decrease. And if we see in the book of John, we won't turn there, but if we go there and we think about the Last Supper, that very night of the Last Supper in betrayal, one of the apostles would say, Show us the Father.

Another would deny Him with cursing. All of them would forsake Him that night. Nevertheless, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them until the end.

God's love never changed for His disciples, for those who were with Him that night. He knew what was going to be happening. He also knew how His chosen ones would react.

[23 : 01] But His love was there for them no matter what. Even when Peter cut the ear off of that soldier, Christ still loved Peter. His delight, His love is subject to no unpredictable changes.

In Romans 8, 35 through 39, it clearly states that nothing can separate us from the love of God. It's unchanging. It's everlasting. It says there, neither from death, from life, angels, or principalities, not from the present or not from the future.

God's love is there for us continually and it will always be there. God's love is gracious. The love and the favor of God are inseparable. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That is absolute love. Christ died not to make God love us but because He did love us. He loved His people. Calvary is a supreme demonstration of that divine love.

So whenever we are tempted to doubt the love of God, all we have to do is go back to Calvary. And when we go back to Calvary, we can know and understand this love that God has for us.

[24 : 12] So we see as we go through Scripture that God is love He wants His fellow, His creation to be love also. And there's many Scriptures that tell us about this love.

Deuteronomy 6.5 tells us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your might. The Biggest 19.18 tells us to love your neighbor as yourself.

1 Corinthians, we just read that this morning, says there are many gifts but the greatest of these is what? It's love. All the other gifts mean nothing without love.

Chapter 13 is a great recap of love that Solomon was talking about which we read there earlier this morning. Now if we turn to Proverbs, if we turn to Proverbs chapter 8.

The first proverb I want to talk about this morning is verse 17 in chapter 8. And in it, it states, I love those who love me and those who diligently seek me will I find.

[25 : 18] God says he loves those who love him. However, in our fallen nature, we are not interested in God's love. So we have to come to the conclusion that the first kindling of this love does not come from us.

It comes from God. As we've seen when we read the other scriptures like Ephesians 1 verse 4. God loved us first.

So when God comes to us and we acknowledge the fact that this God is the one we want, then that love automatically comes into our heart. God implants it there.

We change. There's something new. And one of those things is the love of God. So God says, I love those who love me. If we love God, then God will put that love out to all of us.

Now some people say, well wait a minute, that's not fair. What about the rest of the world? Well, God does love the rest of the world. We've seen that in John 3.16.

[26 : 21] God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He said world there. He didn't say Christians. He said all. So God does love all. Every man is just the same.

in God's eyes. But I do, however, believe that once we know God and we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, once there's a change in our heart, that God does something for us.

He puts more love. He shows us more love. And I think there's a lot of scriptures that will pack that up. He loves his people. That doesn't mean he doesn't love everybody.

He does love everybody. And we know many scriptures that says that. But through his grace, when we earnestly seek him, he implants love in our hearts and then cheers us with the assurance of his own love for us.

God loves the whole world even in this present degenerate state. How do we know this? Well, we talked about John 3.16. But to those who love him, they are objects of his favor.

[27 : 21] God shows favor upon those who love him through Jesus Christ. We see in Romans 8 how the Holy Spirit intercedes for those who love God. This is God's love coming out to those who love him.

In verse 10, it says, through the body be dead because of sin. The Spirit is alive because of righteousness. He gives us a new life. We are dead because of the sin.

But he gives us new life. And that new life is through the Spirit. Verse 23 says that we eagerly await the redemption of our bodies. This is our eternal hope. We know through eternal hope that these bodies will be changed.

And we're looking for that. So one day this dead body will exchange for a glorified one. Verse 26 says, even though we don't know what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes for us.

How many times did that happen in our life? Things come into our life and we just don't know how to pray. But God, through His love, He gives us the words. If we don't even know them, I want to pray for.

[28 : 25] So God is there for us. Verse 30 says, those He predestined, He also called. Those He called, He also justified. Those He justified, He also glorified.

And that is our eternal hope. What a love that God has for us. And the last part of this verse, it says, that those who diligently seek Him or seek Me will I find.

Young people, listen up. What a great opportunity. Seek early in life. Seek God in your youth. To the young, this gracious promise is particularly made.

If they seek, they shall find. Others who are old, they may seek and they will also find. But what's the difference here? The young person has all this life in front of them.

God can use them and bless them in so many different ways. Whereas somebody who accepts the Lord at an older age and prays the Lord that they do, matter of fact, when I think about that, all I can think about is Joyce's dad.

[29 : 34] And I still, I still break up when I think about it. This man was 91 years old. He did not know the Lord Jesus Christ, but he accepted the Lord Jesus when he was 91 years old.

He lived for another four years. And what a change we saw in that man in those four years. So God does use us no matter when we accept His Son into our life.

But young people, when we accept the Lord at a young age, wow, God can use us in such a mighty way. So keep that in mind. The next, well, Psalms 4, 3 says, but know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself.

The Lord were here when I call unto him. So keep that in mind. When we call unto him, he will be there for us. Proverbs 10, 12. Let's turn to that if you would.

And that's also what's great about the book of Proverbs. It just didn't take one topic and have five pages of references to that one topic. You'll see that God spreads this out clear through the whole book of Proverbs.

[30 : 45] And you'll be able to follow the topic that you want to choose and take it clear through the book of Proverbs. And you'll see how he scatters it through there. And as you're reading these Proverbs, and what a great way to do it is, you know, 31 Proverbs, read one each day.

And you'll see as you go through the month how this love will come out and pop out the way he has it spread through there. So Proverbs 10, verse 12, states that hatred steers up strife, but love covers all transgressions.

Whether it's envy, conflict, hostility, or tension, all you need to do is look a little bit deeper, and you'll find one or both parties guilty of hatred.

It's just going to come out. And unless love prevails, the strife will get worse. Love does not fight. It covers offenses, and it covers sins.

It seeks peace and pursues it. Fighting and antagonism, I can't even say it. You know what I mean? Will not exist where each person is practicing Christian charity or love.

[31 : 57] And I believe the agape love also is talking about charity. When we talk about charity when we're in the Bible, it's talking about love. That's what charity is.

Again, that's another word. Today, if we think about charity, we don't necessarily think of the word love. But through the Scriptures, that's what charity means. It means this agape love.

Let us be the greatest peacemakers in the world by practicing the wisdom of this proverb. May the Lord Jesus grant us the grace and wisdom for this task. We can even cover sins like Joseph did for his brothers.

If you go back in the Old Testament and if you recall the story of Joseph and his brothers and what they did to him, you know, what they did for him, they took it one way.

Joseph took it another way. Joseph was a brother. This is brotherly love. That's another type of love. Philippe love. He never forgot those brothers.

[33 : 02] He knew they did it for bad. But he still loved them anyway. And that's what Philippe love is. That's brotherly love. That's brother and sister love.

No matter what happens in a family, we stick together. And again, that just brings up another point. You know, when people say, well, wait a minute, that's not always the case. I know a lot of instances where brothers and sisters, they hate each other.

Sons and mothers hate each other. Sons and fathers hate each other. So how can you make that statement? Proverbs is not a thing that says every time that this is going to happen.

These are generalizations that you can take to the bank. Just about in every instance you're going to have brother and sisterly love, that love will stay there for the rest of their lives.

That's something you don't lose. Now sometimes it does disappear. That love will always come back. That brotherly love. And this is what he's talking about there when Joseph, he had that brotherly love for those brothers.

[34 : 01] He also can combine that with agape love because he also chose to forgive those brothers of the sin that they committed towards him.

And we can also determine in our hearts today agape love. And when somebody hurts us, when somebody damages us, when anything like that comes into our life and we say, wow, I thought this person was my friend, we can choose, choose not to do things against this man, but we can choose to love him just like God loves us, just like this brotherly love that we're talking about.

So it's a choice. We choose to love even when we have conflict. Hatred steers up strife. So my friends, don't have hatred in our hearts.

God doesn't want us to have hatred in our hearts. Okay, his brothers couldn't understand or believe his forgiveness. He put the very best perspective on their horrible sin and wept over all of them.

And when he did that, he forgave them of the sins that he did or they did against him. And of course, we know from the story from there on, what happened is this perpetual thing for the family just kept going and we see the rest of the Old Testament fulfilling from this.

[35 : 26] And God's love just comes out in so many different places. 1 Peter 4, it says, Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins.

Every day, we're going to have somebody that upsets us, that does something against us. The Bible says, Love covers a multitude of sins. Don't let that hatred get into your heart.

Don't let the... Well, just don't let hatred get in there because it will ruin us. Christian parents, here's a great time and a great example that we can set.

Here's a golden opportunity for child training. Train your children in this matter of hatred and love, strife and peace, covering sins and spreading of them. The natural antagonism of children creates a perfect setting for teaching this.

And if all of us that have children, we know the nature of children, don't we? We know that they like to tell bear on each other. They like to tattle.

[36 : 33] They like to have their way. And when somebody offends them, they go running to mom and dad and tell them. They do everything to get their way.

So you see a lot of this type of activity in young people. And this is a great opportunity to sit down and teach the young people that God's love is this type of love where you forgive others when they offend you.

And if we can do that, we can have a lot more children out there without all the hate that we see out there today. And we're seeing more and more of that playing out on the televisions and the newscasts of all the different things that we're seeing from young people that just shouldn't be.

It shouldn't be that they shouldn't know this type of things in their life at this age. But we're seeing it on a day-to-day basis. So great opportunity. Teach them about God's love. Let's turn to Proverbs chapter 15, verse 17.

And I like this one. Better is a deuce of vegetables where love is than a fatted ox served with hatred. Wow. If love unites the heart at the table, it sounds like a feast.

[37 : 43] But if there is hatred in any heart, even filet mignon is a bitter disappointment. A tossed salad and joined in love is better than a steak dinner where the parties hate each other.

These are such little things of wisdom here. And when you think about this and think about the families today that will sit down at a meal and that this is such an opportunity for a family at mealtime.

And I think it's really disheartening today to know that there's so many people and so many sporting events, so many things that take up the family's time that you can't even have a mealtime together. That was uncalled of in earlier days.

I mean, that was the highlight of the day when you come in to have that meal together as a family. And I think we're missing out on that today. We need to take that opportunity to have that family meal.

It's such a great time for everybody to be able to sit down, discuss the events of the day. If somebody hurt me, you have a chance to tell somebody that somebody hurt you. You need to be able to talk about that and to get it to end your mind and have your parents talk to you and give you hints about how you can handle that situation.

[38 : 58] You can't do that when everybody eats at a different time of the day because there is no communication. And when we lose that communication, our relationships have a tendency to fall apart.

Many families have meals with tension and bitterness. It becomes a habit and they don't even know that this is going on. It just becomes an error that just keeps perpetuating over and over again.

Pain becomes a family tradition. The conversations are negative and critical. The children sarcastically cut each other down. Have we seen this situation in your family?

And some are grimly silent in quiet rage. They want to say something but they don't and you just see it in their faces. There's something troubling them. No one truly wants to be there.

These things should never be in a Christian home. Bitter, envying, and strife are all from hell and peace and gentleness from far above. The table should be a place where everyone can share their day and know that they will not be criticized or made fun of.

[40 : 06] And I think that's a very important thing that we as Christian parents should take and to understand and to be able to put into practice in our family.

And I know that's difficult. We say we're in a modern age. Things have changed. But guys, even with hectic schedules, you can still get some time to be able to sit down and get your family together because that communication is so important.

If you don't have it, these type of things will build up and we'll see it played out in people's lives.

Proverbs 17.1 is another part of the same thing we're talking about here.

It goes along with 15.17. It states, Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife.

Our greedy society emphasizes material things as a measure of success. But Solomon teaches here that the good life is not dependent upon what you have but rather the love you share with this family and with other people.

[41 : 09] That's the love that's actually going to be coming out. That's the love that we need to be putting out in our life. So, we need to ask ourselves, what will you do today? Correct the imperfect relationships we have in our home.

With love in all directions, what is on the table becomes a quiet, irreverent, mute thing. It doesn't matter what's on the table. All of our processions don't mean a thing.

We can have steak every night. If we've got kids that's going out with hate instead of love, we need to get that corrected. We need to get back. So, we need to ask ourselves, has somebody offended us in the family?

Have they offended you? Are you harboring bitterness? The remedies are simple. By grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, speak in love to one another.

Speak in love to one another. When we speak, that's when we can tell if somebody loves us the right way or not. So many times we hear bitter fighting and things going on.

[42 : 13] How can you feel love? How can you feel that love? It's just not there. So, we need to take that into consideration. Proverbs 17, 9. Another great example.

He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. You see the thing that's going on here?

One who conceals a transgression seeks love. This is a person that's not out there to take advantage of a situation that's happened in somebody's life and to go out and become a gossip about it.

They're not going to go out and tell the world, hey, this person did this, that person did that. They're seeking love. They're not trying to put this other person down.

But he who repeats a matter separates himself from immediate friends. And that's just the thing that's going to happen. If you repeat continually the problems that people have and you repeat the negative parts of these relationships, then that relationship is going to deteriorate.

[43 : 17] That relationship will no longer be the true friendship that we want to have with the people we have relationships with. Love and friendships are arts taught by wisdom.

This is something that doesn't come natural to us either, this relationship thing. It's something that is taught. And we get that teaching from a lot of different places. We get it from our family, from our mothers and fathers.

We also get it from God's word on how we should treat other people. So it's a taught behavior. This is not something that just comes natural. Remember, agape love. What is agape love?

It's a love of choice. We make a decision to love. All men are naturally arrogant, envious, hateful, cruel, selfish, and vengeful. Only God's grace can save a man from these evil tendencies.

Then love and friendship can be easily learned by wisdom. We can also love these people just like God does. Are you a loving friend? Do others rejoice in your friendships?

[44 : 19] And that's something we need to ask ourselves. Covering a transgression is one way you show love to friends. It is forgiving and forgetting, personal wrong others do to you.

It's certain that sometime in our relationship this friend is going to do something that hurts you. It's just human nature. It's going to happen eventually. something will come up that there's going to be a problem in a relationship.

And we need to be able to handle that when it comes about. And we need to be able to forgive and to forget and not to keep repeating things as they come on. Covering a transgression silences backbiting.

It keeps the tongue from wagging. It dries away every tail bear and whisper. It just does it by nature. If you don't go broadcasting then something's not going to get out.

It refuses to repeat rumors or facts that degrade a person's reputation. True love thinks no evil of others and does not rejoice when it hears of failures or sins in others.

[45 : 23] There's many people out there today that, boy, when they hear about somebody falling, it just lights up their heart. They say, wow, look what he did. That's not what love is about.

That's not the true friendship. Friendship. Covering a transgression conceals news that reflects poorly on another's character. Love protects the reputation of others. That's what true love is all about.

Love and friendships are best practice at home. If you can be charitable and gracious and merciful with your siblings or your spouses, you can also be to any man. So if we can show our love to our kids and to our wife, our husband, then we should be able to go out there and do it to everybody. And even our friends and even our enemies. Children must be taught to overlook sibling offenses rather than to tattle about them. They must be taught to never repeat sibling failures to other people.

Don't take your family problems out to other people. We all have problems, so don't take them. They must learn to cover offenses and seek love. Because marriage is familiar and an intimate relationship with one another, you know more of their failures than any other person.

[46 : 35] So yeah, there's going to be problems in this marriage relationship. You can count on it. It's going to happen. Can you cover, forgive, and overlook without saying anything? Or do you think that mentioning it, that matter, over and over and over again is going to solve the problem or help you in this relationship?

Don't destroy your marriage by building walls between you and your spouse. There's a lot of things that the problem discusses about the marriage relationship. We're not going to cover those today. That will be done in a different study.

But boy, these proverbs just have all kinds of wisdom out there for a married couple or for somebody who's even thinking about marriage and how to treat other people. So brethren, when possible, overlook personal offenses against you by others.

Do not repeat rumors, scuttlebutt, but facts. Use the facts when you're talking about other people and don't try to put them in bad light. Let's go to Proverbs 17, 17.

It says, A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity. What a beautiful picture of a friendship. However, this love is only found where God's grace has melted away the natural bitterness and selfishness and it turns our love into a happy love.

[47 : 56] When the tough times come, a friend, a true friend, stays the course. He'll be there with you day and night. He is like a brother who has that natural bond, that Philippi love, Philippo love, a brotherly love to accept you unconditionally.

I see my wife smelling. I'm misquoting words on her. Okay. That's not unusual for me to mispronounce words. Okay. Families stick together, so should real friends.

That's what God's love is all about. So, this is a good picture. Friends love at all times and a brother is born for adversity. He's there for you no matter what happens.

And that's the type of friendship we're looking for. Proverbs 25, 21. It'll be our last proverb. And this is a good one. This is a hard one.

This is the one that most people say, ah, come on, you've got to be kidding. If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat.

[49 : 03] And if thirsty, give him water to drink. Wow. Come on. So, I think the first thing we have to do is ask, who is the enemy?

What are we talking about here? Who is the enemy? This verse is not talking about national or civil enemies. enemies. Under the Old Testament, the national enemies of Israel were to be exterminated, weren't they?

God told them, go out and terminate these other countries. Don't get mixed up with them. Don't have mixed blood with them. Go out. I'm going to give you a new land to possess.

Go out and destroy these nations. So, God didn't see a problem with that. Okay? Those are enemies. These are not the type of enemies that we're talking about here.

Under the New Testament, nations must protect themselves by fighting enemies. We do that today, don't we? Under any government system, you see the same thing, whether it's here in America, over in Europe, over in East Asia.

[50 : 07] No matter where we're at, we have governments that are war with other governments. This is not the love that we're talking about here. Civil governments will still wage war to protect their citizens, and they will put capital offenders to death by civil laws.

Those things are still intact today. Second, this rule does not modify our authority at all. Parents still discipline their children without regard for this proverb, for it does not apply to them.

Churches still discipline members without regard for this proverb, for it does not apply to them either. The pointed object of the proverb is how man treats his personal enemies.

So we're not talking about the enemies that we just mentioned. We're talking about the enemies that you have in your personal relationships. That's what God is speaking about here. If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

Of course we're not talking about somebody that you're in war with. Why would you want to go out and give them drink? That is not the case here. But your enemies, those of your personal relationships, those are the ones.

[51 : 17] When we have problems with them, we want to treat them the right way. Jesus repeated this proverb in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, Love your enemies. He rebuked our sinful instincts and taught that God sends rain and sunshine on both enemies and friends.

For us to be like our Heavenly Father, we must do the same. We must love our enemies by training them well. The Apostle Paul said the same things in Romans 12, verse 20. You don't need to turn there, but he said, Love thy enemies as thyself.

Love thy enemies as thyself. Many think that Jesus taught a new standard of righteousness, but Solomon taught this same thing over 900 years before in the book of Proverbs, before Jesus was even here.

So when we talk about this and we talk about our enemies, it also means our neighbors. The commandment to love our neighbors includes our enemies. In Mark, when the Sadducees came asked to Jesus what commandment should be first.

They wanted to put these things in order. They had to have everything in just the perfect way. Jesus said in Mark, To love thy God with all thy heart and thy soul.

[52 : 27] The second is to love thy neighbor as thyself. There are no other commandments greater than these. And I think that's what we need to take to the bank. These are the commandments that God wants us to be concentrating on.

It's to love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. And to love thy neighbor as thyself. And man, if we get those two things down, all the other commandments, they're just going to fall in place.

Because the greatest of these is love. So when we get this concept down, when we have this agape love, where we're treating other people the way we want them to treat us, and all the other commandments that God has given through his book, it's just going to be a natural thing that's going to progress from this love that we have.

In Romans 13, 8, Paul says that for the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Galatians 5, 14, says Paul, owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbors has fulfilled the whole law. Wow, this just goes against our natural grain, doesn't it?

[53 : 36] To love our neighbor. These words are noble, but it's hard for us to overturn our hearts and our desire for revenge, and to love and feed our enemy.

Many think this is to be impossible. But, as Les said this morning in our video series back here, nothing is impossible for God.

When we have God, all things are possible, even to love thy enemies. So, we need to examine ourselves about this relationship that we have with those that we have problems with, that we consider our enemies.

Do you hate or despise, or do you love the way Jesus taught us to love? Jesus also sought forgiveness for the soldiers who crucified him, and Stephen followed our Lord's example by praying for those who stoned him to death.

We can do the same. We also have the story in the Gospels about the... Well, I had it there, but I lost it.

[54 : 49] About the man who... The Jewish man was on the road, and he became ill, or he became sick, or he got injured. And three other people walked by and did nothing of his own nation.

But then a Jew came, or a Gentile came by, and what did he do? He showed his love to that man. Now, there was a hatred there between the Gentiles and the Jewish community.

But that was a true love that when we're speaking of. This man knelt down, took care of his wounds, and even took him to a place where he could have lodging overnight. This is the type of love we need to get to, where we would love our enemies the same as the way that we love them.

Well, we're running short of time. I wanted to get into the one example that I really enjoy in the Bible, and that's the one about the prodigal son. And if we want to talk about love, get into the book

and read about the prodigal son.

Here's the example of love. And we have a couple aspects there. We have the prodigal son that ran away. We also have the other son, the other son who stayed, and stayed with the father and worked his tail off for many years.

[56 : 09] And we see two distinct things going on in their lives. And it's such a great story. You know, the son left. He said, Father, give me my inheritance. And in Jewish custom, when a son would say that, and his father wasn't dead, what he's saying is, you might as well be dead as far as I'm concerned.

Give me my inheritance now. And when he did that, he went off. He's wasted his inheritance, and he had to go and work for a pig farmer or whatever it was, and lay in the pig dung.

And when he finally comes to his senses, he says, why am I doing this? I could go back home and work for my father and be treated much, much better than I am here. And that's what he decided to do.

And the father was standing at his door, and far off, he saw his son coming. And he didn't even wait. He ran to that son. Why did he run?

He'd been waiting for his son to come back because of that absolute love that he has for that son. So we know the story, and we also know about the other brother. The other brother became angry when he said, feed the fatted calf of this man.

[57 : 14] He's king back. He was lost, and now he's found. The other brother said, whoa, nothing doing. I stuck around all these years.

I did all these things for you. And you're going to give him this fatted calf, and I haven't had anything? You've never done that for me. You see the attitude coming in? And the father said, my son, all these years, I've loved him.

But he just didn't think it, did he? He didn't understand. He did not understand. Some people, again, will say, well, that's not fair. This thing about the prodigal son and the other brother, that's not fair. It's not fair to who?

After you and me, it probably isn't fair because we would say, hey, that other brother needed a whipping. There's something wrong with his attitude. But as far as God is concerned, if it was up to a perfect righteousness, neither one of the sons would have been forgiven because of their sin. We're all sinful, and we don't deserve the grace that we receive. And that's the bottom line. God loves because he chose. We need a godly love in our life. We need to love because we choose to love others.

[58 : 33] And we've right out of time, so if we have any questions or comments before we go, before we close? If not, let me close in prayer. Father, we do thank you.

We thank you this morning, Father, for your word. And Father, as we talked about love this morning, we just can't do anything but accept the love that you've given us.

A love that we can't even understand most of the time. And Father, a love that you gave to us, you gave to us even when we were at the lowest point in our lives.

Father, there's so many of us said that we do not deserve this grace that you have offered us. And that is true. We do not deserve it. But you have chosen to love your people, and you have chosen to send your Son into the world for us.

Father, you have chosen to make every individual in this world savable because of your love. You love all men. And that comes out through this salvation experience.

[59 : 44] And Father, all we have to do is choose you. We choose to love you because you loved us first. And we thank you for that. Help us to take this love, this new love that you give us when we accept your Son.

This new life that you give us. And help us to live out this love in our day-to-day life. Help us to love others as we would have them to love us. It's a hard lesson to learn.

But we can do that because you've said that we can do all things through you. So, Father, guide us this day as we leave. And this week as we go out into the world, help us to love others as we would have them to love us.

And Father, today we thank you for your amazing grace that you give to us through your Son. We thank you for the new life. And we ask these things this morning in Christ's name.

Amen. Thank you. God bless. God bless.