

**Grace Bible Church**  
***Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries***

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.  
The Tree of Life from the N.E. Bible Conference**

We begin this conference with this phrase: **"To whom much is given, much is required"** Our Lord said **"Everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more"** (Luk 12:48).

**"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.**  
(Luk 17:3)

The Greek word "aphiemi" translated "forgive" means to give up resentment, excuse a guilty party, to forget an offense never bringing it up again, not even to discuss it. It means that you never remind someone of their past.

Looking back at the obstacles that many of you have overcome the past few years, I am thankful for your continued support which has allowed this ministry to go forward. Only in Heaven will it be revealed all you have done. Our Lord said **"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward"** (Mar 9:41). Many of you have had the privilege to overcome the obstacles that Satan and his kingdom of darkness have placed in your path. God has been preparing all of us, as a body of believers, to learn the importance of one word: LOVE.

We are going to look at the doctrinal principle of first taking care of your soul, and by that I mean your relationship with God, and then your household, your family, your church, etc. After those areas of your life are taken care of you're ready to go into the entire world. That's why we read **but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and then even to the remotest part of the earth"** (Act 1:8). Consider what our Lord said to His disciples after He had risen from the dead, **"And that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."** (Luk 24:47).

We must take care of the areas closest to us before we can take care of those who are at a distance. It all begins with you and your personal love for God. **"Do not stare at me because I am swarthy [burnt from the heat], For the sun has burned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, But I have not taken care of my own vineyard. (SOS 1:6).** As an application for us, this is a picture of a believer getting burnt out from serving others, not setting aside enough time to nourish themselves through the intake of doctrine, prayer and fellowship with God. Our Lord taught us to care about fulfilling the Father's plan, glorifying God in the angelic conflict, and not letting others hinder you from your calling, and your personal sense of destiny (Luk 14:18; Luk 14:19; Luk 14:26; Mat 10:35). As we go on in this passage we read, **"Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom"** (SOS 2:15). This verse deals with the matter removing certain hindrances in our life. Spiritually, it refers to the blossoming vines spoken of in verse 13, these vines representing bearing the fruit of spiritual life.

Big foxes go after the fruit of the vine, but little foxes break the tender vine branches. When damage is done by big foxes, you still have a chance to bear some fruit, but with the damage done by little foxes, the chance of bearing fruit is nearly destroyed. Unless we are very attentive, the spiritual life can be completely spoiled by little foxes. If certain areas in our life are unwatched those things can ruin the spiritual life. Don't let the little things spoil your spiritual life, the petty things, personality conflicts, etc. Don't let the details of life, even more importantly, the pressures of serving God, draw life out of you, instead be renewed by the intake of doctrine, and the power of prayer. The apostle John writes the same thing when he tells us that we need to have a deposit made before we make a withdrawal.

**By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but [here is the deposit made for us] that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1Jo 4:9-11).**

The secret to loving is living as one who knows he is loved. This is one of the most important principles in relationships. Remember Paul's prayer to the Ephesians; **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (Eph 3:17).** Are you grounded in love, that is impersonal unconditional love, which has virtue, or do you easily fall apart? Many people tell us to love, but only God teaches us how to love, and then gives us the power to do it. This is what God commands: **And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ [and then after salvation, what?], and that we love [have impersonal unconditional love which has virtue] one another, just as He commanded us (1Jo 3:23).** How can we forgive the back-stabbers we meet, love, and marry? How can we love as God loves us? We want to, we even long to so, but how can we? We can, simply by abiding in the One who is love, and learning the way He thinks. **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither {can} you, unless you abide in Me," (Joh 15:4).**

The apostle Paul gave us the finest chapter on impersonal unconditional love in 1Co 13:4. Impersonal unconditional love, which is a virtue that you can have by studying God's word and applying it, **is patient, kind, and is not jealous; does not brag, and is not arrogant.** In 1Co 13:5 impersonal unconditional love **does not act improper, is never selfish, is not resentful, does not think evil.** How many believers do you know that have these qualities? In 1Co 13:6-7 impersonal unconditional love, which is a virtue that you can have by studying God's word, **does not gloat over other men's sins, rejoices with doctrine; overlooks faults, believes the best, hopes all things, endures all things.** Are you patient, kind, not jealous? Are you arrogant, do you act unbecomingly; are you easily provoked? Do you rejoice in unrighteousness, do you bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things? If you failed in these areas, remember that you are what you are by the grace of God. You should be as Phi 1:6 tells us, **confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you is going perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (the rapture).** So, the greatest manifestation that we are living the spiritual life is whether or not we believe this; **But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1Co 13:13).**

Let's look at a few Biblical expressions of love:  
**He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends (Pro 17:9).**

**"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you Impersonal unconditional love is revealed even toward your enemies, and if you have it, you will even pray**

**at times for those who are persecuting you (Mat 5:44).**

**"If you love Me, you will keep my commands. (1Jo 14:15).**

**"He who has My doctrines and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; (Jo 14:21).**

**He who does not love Me does not keep My doctrines; Joh 14:24).**

Those that have impersonal unconditional love stay with doctrine. **"For this reason, we [pastors] work hard to the point of exhaustion, and we hang in there tough [keep on contending], because we have confidence in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers" (1Ti 4:10).** These men are responsible to reveal the deception of this world system which is designed to take you away from the reason you have been created. In every generation of the Church-age, God supplies the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher so that positive volition among His people can be fed. God uses prepared men, and He provides prepared men for every believer who has positive volition.

### **The Joint analogy**

The joint analogy to the pastor-teacher is another very important principle. Let's note some principles concerning the joints:

1. All parts of the body are linked by joints or ligaments. Joints are those parts of the body where bones or elements of a skeleton join.
2. Joints permit motion and coordination of the human body. In 1Co 12 the different parts of the body are mentioned which represent different spiritual gifts in the Royal Family of God. At the moment of salvation we all received at least one spiritual gift. Different parts of the body represent the variety of differences among believers from the standpoint of spiritual gifts, growth, progress, function, and personality.
3. Joints provide the unity of the body, and give it cohesion. Joints are the point of contact, and the connection between various parts of the body. Cohesion refers to the union of the different parts of the body functioning properly. Just as there are differences in joints of the body, so there are differences among pastor-teachers. The pastor-teacher has to communicate day after day. His responsibility is to inculcate his congregation with Bible doctrine, which is an entirely different type of ministry than evangelism. Therefore, pastors have many different types of personalities. All the members of the Royal Family of God are analogous to the body of Christ, and they are linked together by the doctrinal teaching of the pastor. The emphasis of this doctrinal teaching must focus on the mystery doctrine of the Church age, found in the New Testament epistles. Christianity is not changing your personality to a certain mold, but it is growing spiritually through the perception of doctrine. The pastor's function must not be related to his personality, but to the content of his message. You can receive limited blessing from reading the Bible for yourself, but you can never learn how to execute the spiritual life just from that method. It is the spiritual gift, that God gave the pastor-teacher to be equipped to dig out, and communicate the truth of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. So the principle is without joints, you go nowhere, both physically and spiritually.

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

At the moment of salvation every person becomes a new creature in Christ. Being a new creature and being in union with Jesus Christ, demands a new set of instructions or commands for the dispensation of the Church-age believer. These are summarized under two key words: **Love** and

**Discipleship.** The New Commandment is based on the fact that Christ is glorified, He is absent from the earth, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, awaiting operation footstool, and therefore we have entered into the intensified stage of the angelic conflict. The new commandment is obviously based upon some new provisions that did not exist before this dispensation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby every believer at the point of salvation is entered into union with Jesus Christ. This means that he has the life of Christ-eternal, the righteousness of Christ, the sonship of Christ, the heirship of Christ, the priesthood of Christ, the election of Christ, the destiny of Christ, and eventually he will reign with Jesus Christ. The indwelling of Christ is also another factor. For the first time in all of history every believer is indwelt by God the Son. For the first time in history every believer is a priest, is an ambassador and therefore the personal representative of Jesus Christ. Ambassadorship could not exist until after the incarnation, until Christ was absent from the earth, and therefore every believer is now in fulltime Christian service.

It is to your advantage that you operate in the impersonal unconditional love: Let's look at some principles concerning this type of agape love.

1. At the point of salvation every believer passes the point of propitiation which places him under maximum divine love (1Jo 2:2).
2. Therefore, God is now free to love every believer with maximum love **in spite** of the believer's spiritual status in this life.
3. Agape is a specialized love related to the mentality of the soul.
4. When used in connection with God it has a broader expanse, it means that God loves us in spite of the fact that He knew ahead of time what we were like. So it is related to the omniscience of God.
5. The noun agape, in many areas of the New Testament, is a reference to one of the new power options, the filling of the Spirit, (Rom 5:5; 1Jo 2:5, Gal 5:22).

So agape love is not just the love of God, it a mental attitude or a way of thinking. This is why even the unbeliever can have agape love:

**"And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men [agaped] loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. (Joh 3:19)**

**For they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. (Joh12:43)**

**"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (Joh 13:34)**

What is this thing called love? In our amplified translation of Phi 1:9 we saw that the apostle Paul prayed for the Philippian church, **In fact, I pray this, that your virtue-love may excel to the maximum still more and more by means of metabolized doctrine resulting in all spiritual discernment.**

The Biblical subject of love therefore begins with learning how to love! God's love, or impersonal unconditional love, is not an emotion or a feeling; it is a system of thinking. Whether it's personal or impersonal love concentration is needed. Love, as a system of thinking, is something that needs to be learned. This is why we have such passages as: **And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. (1Jo 4:16).** Love is something that we have to come to know, and believe. **The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Rom 5:5).** Phi 1:9 says **In fact, I pray this, that your virtue-love may excel to the maximum still more and more by means of metabolized doctrine resulting in all spiritual discernment.** 1Th 4:9 says **Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.**

True biblical love is something that needs to be taught. Personal love is based on attractiveness, and rapport with the object. However, impersonal love is based on the virtue of the subject. Personal love is a possessive and subjective attitude toward a few. Impersonal love is an objective, and relaxed attitude toward the entire human race. Personal love is the expression of man's ego. Impersonal love is the expression of man's virtue. Personal love is vulnerable to arrogance and hypersensitivity. Impersonal love is free from arrogance, including jealousy, hatred, bitterness, vindictiveness, guilt, self-pity, implacability, and revenge. Personal love only has virtue as it relates to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The virtue of impersonal love then is a great problem solving device toward people. You must remember that personal love in the human race has no built-in virtue. Personal love in friendship, romance, or marriage must depend on something outside of that love for its virtue. There is no capacity for love apart from virtue:

**Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. (Col 4:2-13)**

Hierapolis had many false religions, and yet Christianity became very solid in the face of religion and cults. The city had been a religious cultist city under the stronghold of Satan and yet Christianity emerged right in the midst of this environment. This is why Epaphras was deeply concerned. He knew that there were many distractions, and he didn't want those believers with PVTD to fall away. In verse 14, we come to a man who was not only a distinguished physician, in fact, Paul's personal physician, but Luke is a demonstration of the fact that a man can be great in his profession, and even greater as a believer. **Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas (Col 4:14).** Luke is the writer of the book of Luke, and the first half of the book of Acts. He was a well educated Gentile from Antioch. He was a physician or a doctor, an historian and a true intellectual. He was a very brilliant and very observant person and he was one of Paul's most devoted and faithful friends. Luke apparently had only one patient and keeping that one patient alive was actually keeping the rest of the world alive. Most of all, Luke was a man as true as steel with Christian character and integrity. Luke attended to Paul's health, kept his writings, guided him in his courses, encouraged him in his sorrows, inspired him in his labors, and had fellowship with him in doctrine. This is why the Apostle spoke of him as the "beloved physician," and "my fellow worker." Luke was a true friend which is a very rare thing to find. Remember that the Bible does warn us to be very careful in the selection of friends. Friendships are the types of relationships which can sneak up upon you and take you for a ride or take

advantage of you. That's why David tells us to be careful of the familiar friend who you think that you can trust and then you find out you shouldn't have in Psa 41:9. A true friend, if you have any, is the one who knows all about you and still likes you. Be very careful who you allow to get real close to you! Because if that person is an opportunist, one who takes advantage of any opportunity to achieve a personal goal, you will be shocked at how fast they will take advantage of you. Be careful for those who become your friend because of what they can get from you, as Pro 19:6 teaches. Remember this principle: Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them. Most of us have had certain so-called friends who were there simply because we were signing their pay checks, or because of what they could get from us. However, when a little adversity comes in, these individuals go running to the highest bidder. Then there are those so called friends who flatter you with their speech as the friend in Pro 27:14. In fact, the loss of prosperity will test the reliability, and the faithfulness of your friends. There are also friends who will forsake you when you need them the most as in Mar 14:50. There are also the ones who really shock you. Then there are those who claim to be your friends and who claim to love you who will turn against you when you're faced with tremendous adversity, **"All my familiar friends scorn me, And those I love have turned against me."** (Job19:19). It is a tremendous wake up call concerning the nature of humanity when you realize that there were people in your life who you truly loved, and who you would lay down your life for, who turn against you for the right price. It is a very shocking experience to have someone that you trust turn on you for personal gain.

Remember this principle: A **doubtful** friend is worse than a **certain enemy**.

If there is anything that is priceless to have in life, it is true friends. **"A true friend loves at all times and as a brother is born for adversity (Pro 17:17)**. They will stick up for you and defend you when you're not there. Friendship makes prosperity marvelous and lightens adversity by dividing and sharing it. Between true friends, there is also no need for justice. True friends do not forsake you in times of disaster, humiliation or defeat. When you're prospering, everyone is your friend! When you go through adversity, you will discover who your enemies really were!

We continue our study with the subject of relationships in the Body of Christ, and that means the subject of fellowship. This is a very important principle to look out for when it comes to relationships in the local assembly. Reaction and Distraction can take place in Christian fellowship, and friendship which is why you should be very careful to choose your friends wisely, and never let someone stop you from continuing to take in doctrine, and this includes anyone in the congregation. Many individuals are led astray from the plan of God, and Bible doctrine, simply because they refused to separate from those involved in religion, self-righteousness, legalism, and apostasy! One of the main reasons why most believers refuse to do that is simply because of the false view they have on the doctrine of fellowship. They think that fellowship means putting your doctrinal differences aside and loving each other. In reality, the love that the Bible commands us to have is a love based on doctrine. As the apostle Paul said, **And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more by means of epignosis knowledge and all discernment, (Phi 1:9)**. What about our fellowship with one another? We must make sure that fellowship with believers does not take us away from the plan of God. This can also happen because of personality conflicts or divisions between people! If you are going to enter into fellowship with other believers, there are a few biblical principles that you should follow:

Psa 119:63 the writer who was under extreme pressure said, **I am a companion of all those who respect Thee, and of those who keep Your doctrines.**

Psa 101:6 David said, **My eyes shall be upon the "faithful" of the land, that they may dwell with**

**me; he who walks in integrity is the one who will minister to me.**

Psa 101:7 on the other hand, **he who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; he who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me.**

If you have fellowship with believers based on your fellowship with God, you have something very rare in Christianity today. Notice what Paul said concerning what true fellowship with other believers should be based on. **If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, [and there is, says the first class condition], if there is any comfort from love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, Make my happiness complete by being of the same mind [this is thinking the same things from doctrinal orientation and grace orientation] maintaining the same virtue love, united in spirit [soul in the original]. Do nothing from selfishness [lust] or empty conceit [arrogance], but with humility of mind [from doctrine resident in the soul] let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this mind in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus (Phi 2:1-5).** That's the means and the results of having true godly fellowship based on integrity and virtue love.

If your fellowship with others is based upon these principles you will not enter reaction or distraction when there are problems between each other. You will solve your problems as adults and not let the one who desires to cause division, who is Satan, get the best of you. You don't grow through Christian fellowship, you just learn about how much you've grown. How much you can take. How much you can handle. How much grace, love and patience you really have. Wrong experience with God results in wrong experience with people, it doesn't matter how well you get along with others. For example, when it came to crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ, Herod and Pilate became friends with each other. Some believers who couldn't stand each other come together when it comes to hating someone else. It's only a matter of time before they bite, and devour each other and enter into spiritual cannibalism.

Wrong fellowship with God results in wrong fellowship with people. If you are believer in Jesus Christ, the plan of God for you calls for God to be your number one priority over people. If God is not your number one priority, then Bible doctrine, which explains invisible God, is not your number one priority. Inevitably you are going to run into some people in your local assembly who rub you the wrong way. All of us rub someone the wrong way at some time, so do not let a personality conflict cause you to be distracted from God's plan for your life, and God's local assembly for your growth. Social life with Christians has varying consequences. It can either be a distraction or a source of encouragement to perception of doctrine. Spiritual growth and the execution of the PPOG and subsequent glorification of God occurs only through perception of doctrine, not through Christian fellowship. Most of the problems we face in life, we face alone, and therefore we are to derive our strength from within, not from people without! This is what it means to be spiritually self sustained! The apostle Paul said, **I can do all things through HIM who strengthens me. (Phi 4:13).** Not through people, but through Him!

Heb 13:5-6 reminds us that people will leave you and forsake you; but the Lord will not!

Christian fellowship is nice to have if there is no legalism involved, but Christian fellowship cannot advance the believer in God's plan, purpose, or will for his life. If you have to ever make a choice between fellowship or doctrine, you better choose doctrine or you will be a loser! If you have fellowship with positive believers who have virtue, integrity, and who recognize the privacy of your priesthood and yet can have a wonderful relationship with you, you will make some of the greatest friendships in this life. The advantage to such friendships is that you are not depending on them; you're

depending on the Lord.

**And do not be conformed to this world** [the ways of the world], **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind** [having your mind or thought pattern renewed with doctrine], **that you may prove what the will of God is** [God's plan for your life], **that which is good** [your advance to the different stages of spiritual growth] **and acceptable** [the execution of the PPOG] **and perfect** [reaching spiritual maturity]. **For through the grace given to me I say to every one among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think** [in other words, don't be arrogant and proud] **; but to think so as to have sound judgment** [or to be a rational person, which we are going to see that believers in reversionism also lose their ability to be rational or reasonable and sensible], **as God has allotted to each a measure of faith or a standard of thinking from doctrine."** (Rom 12:1-3)

Assembling together for Bible study, and other forms of worship, must never be confused with Christian fellowship. **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the habit of some, but for the purpose of encouragement"** (Heb 10:25). The present active participle of the Greek verb "parakaleo" means to be encouraged. So we assemble for the purpose of encouragement, and that encouragement is the perception of Bible doctrine, not Christian fellowship. Someone may inspire you to come to Bible class once, but that alone cannot keep you there. What keeps you coming to Bible class is your own motivation from your own understanding and perception of doctrine, and making it the number one priority in your life. Your Christian fellowship with other believers is inconsequential! It is your fellowship with God that counts! Many believers cannot assemble with others for Bible doctrine and encouragement from the Word of God. While some believers are isolated from Christian fellowship, they are not isolated from the communication of Bible doctrine. God always supplies a right pastor with doctrine for positive believers. For some positive believers, doctrine is provided through face-to-face teaching in a local church. For others, doctrine is communicated through tapes, audio, video, books, radio, etc. God always supplies a right pastor-teacher with doctrine for the positive believer. While the isolated Christian cannot assemble himself with other believers, he still fulfills the concept of Heb 10:25 through his daily perception of doctrine on the internet, tapes, video, audio, etc. Under the principle of supply and demand, the demand of positive volition is for accurate Bible teaching regardless of the geographical location. Therefore, accurate Bible teaching can only come through someone who is prepared, and who is teaching line upon line, precept upon precept, especially the mystery doctrine for the Church-age. In conclusion, Christian fellowship or social life with other believers at best is a result of taking in doctrine, whether you assemble with other believers or get it on your own in isolation. Positive believers should not assemble in a local church if there is false doctrine being taught. For a believer who is positive, Bible doctrine is never denied. Bible doctrine is denied to no believer.

In our study of Christian fellowship we now move to the subject of being single and dating. God has a will concerning your role as a single person. God is not a respecter of persons, and you are not the exception to the rule. He has a directive will for the believer who is single as well as for the believer who is involved in romance or dating. We are all born single, and we will all experience a certain amount of time in the single life. Most people will end up married, and we assume that they will have dated to some extent. Since it is inevitable that people will end up in a romantic relationship, what must occur in the life of a single person to prepare them to have success in the personal love of a romantic relationship? First, personal love for another member of the human race is not commanded in the Bible. As a single believer the plan of God for your life is the same whether you will ever get involved in a romantic relationship or not. Though we are not commanded to have personal loves for people, we are commanded to have personal love for God, and if we don't we will be under a curse:

**If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha. (1Co 16:22).**

Before attraction motivates you to begin a dating relationship, it is vital that you love the Lord first. If not, the curse of not loving the Lord will carry over into your relationship. Learning to love God will solve the problems of loneliness. The Church is not a lonely hearts club. It is a place where you learn to love God so you can enjoy your alone time. If you're not happy by yourself, what makes you think that others are going to enjoy being with you? In romance, false exteriors are usually put up that veil the true individual. The real you is who you are when you're alone. Part of dating is to take the time to see the real person behind the veil. Therefore, as a single person, your first love should be God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son. Dating is optional, it is your choice if you want to get involved in romance. The believer who is trained in doctrine knows that personal love is a creator of problems in life. The problems that are created in personal love can only be solved with the problem solving device of impersonal unconditional love. Therefore, the goal of the single believer is to develop impersonal unconditional love before any romantic relationships are attempted. Personal love for God is motivational virtue in the Christian way of life. It is characterized by confidence in God, and courage towards the human race. After a certain amount of time set by God to enjoy his new found confidence, the believer is placed in providential preventative suffering.

This suffering comes in four categories: people testing, thought testing, system testing and disaster testing. After passing these tests the believer reaches the second stage of spiritual adulthood. At this stage the believer has maximum love for God and maximum impersonal unconditional love for all. It is here that you can safely date! The people you love are the greatest test, because they have the potential to let you down more than anyone else, and they will let you down. Everyone has an OSN, and since personal love emphasizes the attractiveness of the object, that object will let you down. You are not to put another person on a pedestal, or make a role model out of them. You know what's in man and your only role model is the lord Jesus Christ.

Dating can be a positive experience or a negative one. Which experience it will be is revealed in the first stage of the man-woman relationship. There are three stages in the man-woman relationship. The first stage is attraction. This first stage is that characteristic of a person which elicits interest or attention, hence, an attractive quality in another person. Attraction is generally overt and emphasizes physical appeal. It can include many things, such as allurements, enticement, or fascination. Attraction may include physical beauty, overt personality, or seeing the fulfilment of one's personal standards (the knight in shining armor). Attraction is the reconnaissance stage of the man-woman relationship. It has to do with the superficialities of life, such as dress, appearance, personality, manners, smell [before you reach SA don't bathe], sex appeal. The attraction stage has not yet faced the facts of life. Another person's problems may be the catalytic agent that destroys the relationship. Concentration on the object of love in the attraction stage has a very narrow field of vision, often resulting in the erroneous conclusion that the object of your love is the only person in the world for you. People who get married in the attraction stage have very little chance of success, but it can be overcome by strong spiritual growth.

The second stage of the man-woman relationship is compatibility. Compatibility is the capacity of a man and a woman to remain together without undesirable after effects. Compatibility is a mutual tolerance, motivated by three categories of virtue-love: personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, and occupation with the Person of Christ. Compatibility is a total adjustment to the other person so that he or she is the most important person in the world to you. While attraction is the blind stage of romance, compatibility is the enlightened stage. In this stage you have learned the strengths and weaknesses of the object of your love, and you have already resolved most of the problems of relationship. Whatever the sins, failures and weaknesses of your partner, they do not

diminish your love for him or her. Compatibility is the problem-solving stage of romance; therefore, it is the best time for marriage. Those involved have used the privacy of their own priesthood to solve the problems. In compatibility both male and female take responsibility for their own decisions. Tolerance and understanding prevail in this stage. When attraction in romance becomes disappointment or disillusion, you can end the relationship forever. When attraction in marriage becomes disappointment or disillusion, you cannot jump out, and be in the directive will of God. Compatibility must be established before marriage, not after marriage. Do not get married in the attraction stage, but first attain compatibility. This stage will blend in with the problem-solving devices. Compatibility is the stage of virtue-love. No decision should be made about marriage until you have all the facts; and all the facts are not in until you have reached this stage. The greatest manifestation of compatibility is conversation. A successful marriage is a long conversation that seems all too short. Your moment-to-moment compatibility is in conversation. Premarital sex destroys those standards of virtue upon which compatibility is based. Premarital sex causes the fornicators to use emotion as the strength of their love, and emotion has no strength. The strength of romantic love is virtue, which is produced by learning, thinking and solving problems using Bible doctrine.

The third stage of the man-woman relationship is rapport. This is the harmonious stage of romance and marriage. This is the status quo of sympathy and empathy, the spiritual identification with the object of your love. This is the fusion of opposites in the understanding of feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of the object of your love. This is the fulfilment of the divine mandates of marriage:

**“Wives, be subordinate to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them.” (Col 3:18)**

**“Wives, be subordinating yourselves to your own husbands as to the Lord.” (Eph 5:22)**

**“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself as a substitute for her.” (Eph 5:25)**

The husband is required to have impersonal love in marriage. The wife is required to have enforced and genuine humility, objectivity and teachability. This means that the husband teaches the wife in marriage. His personal and impersonal love motivates him to teach her. Rapport is where the wisdom of application of metabolized doctrine pays great dividends in human relationships.

### **Operating in the Royal Family.**

**Finally, [or from now on], be strong or start becoming strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His Word. Pick and put on the full armor from God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (Eph 6:10-11)**

The schemes of the devil attacks both the grace of God, and the judicial decisions of God. So the very fact we are told to clothe ourselves in the armor, and that we have to put on each piece, and we are told how to put on each piece, reveals that every one of us is engaged in this battle. It is also another command for the believer to put on the spiritual life which can only be done through rebirth (1Jo 1:9).

These different weapons mentioned in this passage refer to the believer recognizing that there is an intense invisible warfare that we are all apart of. The first two items mentioned in this verse has to do with truth, or doctrine and the breastplate of righteousness, or operating in the Royal Family honor code. It all begins with understanding what it means when it says "put on the breastplate of righteousness," which is the Greek noun "dikaiosunes" which means righteousness, integrity, virtue, correct thinking. "Dikaiosune" is used for the righteousness of God which is imputed to us at the

moment of salvation. This gives us the potential for having great personal integrity. However, in this context it is used for the attainment of divine integrity through consistent perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine.

The breastplate of righteousness is the virtue and the honor attained through the perception of Bible doctrine. The belt came first, and then we are to put on the breastplate. The belt is the absolute truth of the word of God, or Bible doctrine, and the breastplate is attached to that truth. This simply means that all integrity and the fulfillment of the Royal Family honor code comes from Bible doctrine. However, you will never have this integrity and operate in the Royal Family honor code unless you first of all desire truth. Then, you have to listen to truth so that you have knowledge of truth. Thirdly you have to think truth, and this is the basis for Christian integrity. We are under God's plan, God's will and God's purpose, this virtue, honor and integrity is required of us.

It doesn't start with some system of morality, or some system of doing something that you consider good. Bible doctrine makes it very clear that honor and integrity are infinitely greater than morality. Honor and integrity can only be attained by learning the truth, knowing the truth, thinking the truth, and applying the truth. That is the entire integrity package.

What is the Royal Family honor code?

- a. The Royal Family honor code or putting on the breastplate of righteousness is a system of spiritual integrity mandated by God and revealed in the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. It is really based upon one simple principle.
- b. The Royal Family honor code or putting on the breastplate of righteousness relates to personal integrity on the part of believers in relationship with other persons. In fact, the honor code or putting on the breastplate of righteousness is a supplement to impersonal love for all believers.

As a part of the Royal Family honor code, the believer needs to understand that he is born again into a status quo of aristocracy. The Church-age is the dispensation of the Royal Family of God. Therefore we must have royal function. The great enemy to the honor code is gossip, maligning, and slandering others. Those are the number one sins that destroy the Royal Family honor code and make it impossible to put on the breastplate of righteousness.

**"Therefore, having laid aside the lie, each one of you speak the truth with his fellow-believer, since we are members one of another." (Eph 4:25).** The lie is anything which contradicts the honor code.

Twenty principles:

1. The standards of aristocracy do not condone gossip, maligning and slander Rom 14:4. So right away, you know when someone is not operating under the Royal Family honor code and the standards of aristocracy, just by the words coming out of their mouth. Aristocracy doesn't condone gossip, maligning and slander.
2. The standards of aristocracy do not condone the violation of privacy and sticking your nose into the affairs of others (1Pe 4:15).
3. The standards of aristocracy do not condone a passive slothful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ (Mar 12:30).
4. The standards of aristocracy do not condone acting independently of God and the PPOG (1Co 1:12)
5. The standards of aristocracy do not condone coming short of God's righteousness (Mat 5:20).
6. The standards of aristocracy do not condone immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (Eph 5:3).
7. The standards of aristocracy do not condone putting aside doctrine and loving each other, Joh 13:34-35. Our love is to manifest we are students of doctrine in Joh 13:34-35.
8. The standards of aristocracy do not condone arrogance, jealousy, implacability with revenge

motivation (Pro 6:16-18).

9. The standards of aristocracy do not condone sowing discord or strife between the brethren (Pro 6:19).

10. The standards of aristocracy do not condone the rejection of Bible doctrine from one's right pastor (Heb 13:17).

11. The standards of aristocracy do not condone stealing money or being dishonest for monetary gain (1Pe 5:2).

12. The standards of aristocracy do not condone emotional sins such as fear, worry, anxiety, anger and hatred (Rom 14:23).

13. The standards of aristocracy do not condone legalism, self-righteousness, and rejection of authority (Gal 5:1).

14. The standards of aristocracy do not condone morality as a substitution for Christianity, Tit 3:5.

15. The standards of aristocracy do not condone blessing from God through human good or dead works, Heb 6:1.

16. The standards of aristocracy do not condone blessing from God through human achievement or self-sacrifice rather than grace (Col 2:6).

17. The standards of aristocracy do not condone discrediting any pastor who communicates Bible doctrine (Rom 14:4).

18. The standards of aristocracy do not condone thinking evil and presumption, 1Co 13:7.

19. The standards of aristocracy do not condone distraction and withdrawing from Bible doctrine (1Ti 4:1).

20. The standards of aristocracy do not condone apathy, indifference, and wrong priorities toward the plan of God (Phi 3:14).

It's not just the superiority of weaponry by which wars are won, but it's also through information and intelligence. Likewise the same is true in this great spiritual invisible battle in which we are waging in spiritual warfare. Not only do you have an individual testimony in the angelic conflict, but you also have a corporate testimony in your marriage. Most of you are familiar with the overall commands, or mandates that are given to all believers in all the relationships we have:

a. Love one another as Christ loved the Church (1Jo 3:16).

Then there is the mandate to submitting to one another because of your respect of God (Eph 5:21).

Both husband and wife are to be mutually involved in intimacy (Eph 5:33). Of course, the husband and wife are to love each other unconditionally, and impersonally. Especially the mandate in Eph 5:25

**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.**

Most husbands can benefit from spending a good deal of time reflecting on the kind of love the Lord Jesus Christ loves the Church with. We can't love them in the measure that He loved the Church when He was being judged for our sins, because that would be impossible. None of us could ever fulfill a mandate like that. In many cases we have difficulty in forgiving their sins, let alone praying for them.

It's just like the mandate for the woman. Wives, be subject to or respect your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (Eph 3:18). The wife must learn to respect and honor herself before she can honor and respect her husband. However, now watch this statement carefully; if you can become objective instead of subjective and look at your marriage as one of the greatest weapons in the most significant arena's in life for the demonstration of the grace and love of God in the angelic conflict.

Then you have begun to enter into the greatest mysteries of marriage in the Church-age. **This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).** The information about marriage in the dispensation of the Church-age, also called the mystery age, is some of the greatest forms of intelligence for the defeat of the greatest creature genius, and his plot in human history. The spiritual intelligence we have right now concerning the institution of Christian marriage,

not marriage in general, but Christian marriage, which was once classified information, concealed and restricted from both angels and mankind, is what the Bible calls a mystery. The apostle Paul laid out the divine laws of marriage, which are;

1. **Husbands, love your wives (Eph 5:25).**
2. **Wives, respect your husbands (Col 3:18).**
3. **Forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Eph 4:32).**

When the apostle Paul laid out these divine laws of marriage, he then throws in two verses. In Eph 5:31 **For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.** In Eph 5:32 **This mystery is great;** What mystery? The mystery is based upon what Paul stated in verse 31, that the **two shall become one flesh.** The original divine design of sex in the garden was a type or a preview of something even greater to come in the Church-age concerning the relationship of Christ and His Church, His future bride. Think of it, Satan had a plan to destroy the institution of marriage in the garden where sex was the ultimate expression of their love for each other. Sex was not created originally for procreation, but for recreation and enjoyment. There was no subjectivity or self-consciousness. One of the greatest manifestations of those attacks was the destruction of the original divine design concerning sex. Optimum satisfaction in sex is related to virtue in the soul, not sexual athleticism. It's a generation of self-destructive fools who scoff at virginity, and promote premarital experience as some kind of normal lifestyle and virtue. That generation is described, **Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness [human and Satanic viewpoint] for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isa 5:20).**

**Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. (Gen 6:1-4).**

Demons had sex with women, which was an attempt to keep Jesus Christ from coming into the world. In fact, sex is being used in a similar way today to the same thing. Sex was designed by God for the man and woman to recover a piece of paradise and the blessings lost by the first man and the first woman. Yet fornication ruins that provision, robs the couple of that piece of paradise, although the sensation is pleasing in fornication until boredom sets in. Fornication substitutes the sweetness of the cycle of sexual response with the bitterness of dissatisfaction, loss, guilt and condemnation. However, there's still more to this mystery. When a man let's his sexual and physical aggressiveness overflow to others, he is ruining someone else's right-woman.

**Drink water from your own cistern, And fresh water from your own well. (Pro 5:15)**

The Hebrew word for "drink" is "shathar" which means to drink and enjoy, have your thirst quenched, to banquet, to feast. It is used for the right woman meeting the thirst for right man and vice-versa. There is a definite shock of recognition when a person finds a mate whom God has designed for them. However, promiscuity destroys discernment so that when the one that God did design for him or her comes around, the shock of recognition will be dulled and obscured. The word for "cistern" is "bowr" which means a covered well. The right woman is to be covered to everyone else, and only the right man is to pull the cover off. The right man is covered to everyone else and only the right woman is to pull the cover off. The wrong woman is one who advertises, trying to show what she has, trying to attract the males of human race. Remember that there is restoration and reconstruction of any

infirmities in this area, even if you're a married person now, and you have failed in the past. There is instantaneous grace recovery when you rebound, and then there is continued rehabilitation from perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. The point is if a woman keeps trying to splash everyone, she'll be a dry well when the right one comes along. Therefore, the water which is a reference to the response of the woman is to wait in the well until the right one uncovers and then she meets his thirst. In other words, she waits for the one who has the right to drink from it.

Sex was designed by God for the right man and right woman to recover a piece of paradise and the blessings lost by the first man and the first woman. Yet fornication ruins that provision, it robs the couple of that piece of paradise, though certainly the sensation is pleasing in fornication in the actual act, until boredom sets in. Fornication substitutes the sweetness of the cycle of sexual response with the bitterness of dissatisfaction, loss, guilt and condemnation.

When a man's spring overflows to others it falls into the streets adultery and fornication take place. When a man let's his springs, his sexual and physical aggressiveness overflow to others, he is ruining someone else's right-woman.

**Let them be yours alone, And not for strangers with you. (Pro 5:17)**

Premarital sex always creates handicaps in marriage, both related to the soul and to the body. The man will tend to use his wife as a vessel for his own gratification rather than regarding her needs, and carefully having sex with her according to understanding and with self-control. Self-gratification is not a virtue and is associated with self-absorption. Likewise in the case of the female who has had premarital sex, there's always the danger of thinking of someone else who supposedly had some better technique, or with whom she had more passion. Of course usually she had more passion for her first love because that passion was meant to be for her husband who was designed to be her first lover. So there's a problem there, but don't forget the restoration part of this. The worry, fear, and guilt that arise from premarital sex also hinders the woman's ability to have normal orgasms even if she is with the right man for her.

**Let your fountain [your physical sexual aggressiveness] be blessed, (Pro 5:18)**

This means to be blessed and to produce happiness. There is a direct connection between premarital virginity and post-marital happiness. This is something that parents need to take and transfer to their children. Parents need to do more than just to forbid their children about these things and warn them of it, they need to tell them things about it.