

LOVE: THE GREATEST WALK

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

Followers = *Mimetes* in Greek, which means **imitators**. It is said that imitation is the highest form of compliment. Most everyone is inspired at times by someone they look up to. As a young teenager I would practice shooting basketball free throws in the haymow of our barn. I would see how many I could make in a row. I was inspired by Bill Bradley, a college player at Princeton University who averaged nearly 90% free throws made in a game. One day while practicing, I made 28 in a row. Obviously, a real game situation would be much more difficult, but I had fun with the fantasy.

Jesus set the ultimate standard for the love walk with a 100% success rate, despite the fact that he faced unbelievable obstacles along the way. The life of Jesus was a sweet fragrance to God and so was his sacrificial love which he displayed on the cross. He even spoke words of forgiveness towards those who accused, mocked and executed him.

A month before I headed to England for long term mission work in June of 1986, I asked God if there was any particular book he wanted me to read in preparation. I had already been meditating on the book of Ephesians and the first chapters of Joshua. God led me to read a particular book by Kenneth Copeland. It was all about learning to trust in and walk in the love of God. Here are the chapter titles in the book:

WALKING THE REALM OF THE MIRACULOUS

1. Faith in God's Love
2. Developing the God Kind of Love
3. Keeping Yourself in Love
4. Walking the Love Walk
5. Walking in the Realm of the Miraculous

My favorite disciple of Jesus is John, as he is the apostle of love. The book of first John is a powerful and important book for the ages. We will look at it more closely in another message. However, there is one scripture that penetrated my consciousness in May of 1986 and one I would need to ‘rely on’ in the coming years when I faced disappointments, misunderstandings and personal attacks.

‘And so we **know** and **rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God**, and God in him. - 1 John 4:16 NIV

‘If God is for us, who can be against us?’ - Romans 8:31

‘Love never fails.’ - 1 Corinthians 13:8

‘Little debts we don’t forgive are what gives Satan place in our lives. Getting into strife is the most dangerous thing you can do. A step out of love is a step into sin. Love is a way of life - a life of being love-conscious instead of self-conscious. Walking in love will get rid of fear.’ - Kenneth Copeland.

Even if the whole world is against us, or if it seems that way, we can still keep moving forward in our walk with God. It is possible if we rest in the fact that the most important and powerful person in the universe loves and accepts us. Just before Paul wrote the words about walking in love in Ephesians 5, he warned about **things that give the devil a foothold and that grieve the Holy Spirit.**

* Lying to each other * Unrighteous anger * Unwholesome, corrupt talk * Bitterness *
* Rage * Slander * Brawling * Malice

7 Abominations God Hates - Proverbs 6:16-19

- Proud look, haughty eyes
- Lying tongue
- Hands that shed innocent blood
- Heart that devises wicked schemes
- Feet that are quick to rush into evil
- False witness that speaks lies
- Person that stirs up dissension among brothers

Paul has another list that describes the sinful state of mankind - Romans 3:13-18

- Throats are open graves (death spreaders)
- Tongues that practice deceit
- Poison of vipers is on their lips
- Mouths are full of cursing and bitterness
- Feet are swift to shed blood
- Destruction, ruin and misery mark their ways
- The way of peace they do not know
- No fear of God before their eyes

Did you notice now how often God warns us about the use of our **words** and **tongue**? It is on full display in our world with chaos in the streets and vitriolic words and lies being spread like a virus in this cosmic battle between God and Satan, light and darkness, life and death, truth and lies, righteousness and wickedness, purity and perversion. Christianity and paganism. Words and actions reveal what is in people’s hearts. The mobs in the streets are full of hate not love.

‘Consider what a great forest is set on **fire** by a small spark. **The tongue** also is a **fire**, a world of evil among the parts of the body. **It corrupts** the person, **sets the whole course of his life** on **fire**, and is itself set on **fire** by hell.’ - James 3:5-6 NIV

A small band of Christians began to shake a mighty empire with the force of God's power as they demonstrated His love among one another and also towards their enemies. It all started in the early '30's when God came upon them with mighty **tongues of fire**. It was a **holy fire** that **purified** their **hearts and tongues**. The power of God's love and truth can also change our world as it did through the first disciples of Jesus. However, those who speak God's truth will face great opposition, accusation and even be described as haters. Google, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and other social media sites are often censors of 'free speech' that comes from Christians and because it exposes their false narratives fueled by cultural Marxism, which is disguised by the term of political correctness.

Truth is hate speech to those who hate the truth. - unknown author

Today it is worse to judge evil than it is to do evil. - Os Guinness

**If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. - Jesus
- John 15:18**

**Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you
may be (mature) sons of your Father in heaven. - Jesus / Matthew 5:44,45**

Jesus Christ walked in love from start to finish during his life on earth. Even when he was falsely accused at his trial and insulted on the cross, he displayed awesome power and love to refrain from retaliating or making threats. He entrusted himself to God's righteous judgments. - 1 Peter 2:21-23. **He calls us to follow in His steps.**

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