



Glenn Brown

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441 ½ Lark Drive

Grand Junction, Colorado 81504

Telephone 970-434-1377

HOW ARE YOU DOING ON THE LOVE THING?

The other morning I was sitting on my patio as the birds started welcoming the dawn, and the presence of God was real and beautiful. Deep within I felt satisfied, contented, at peace. I thought, "This is what everybody is looking for." No wonder Jesus compared it to treasure that a man found in a field, and he sold everything he had to buy that field. As I sat there in God's presence, I realized full well that His blessing on my life was in spite of my failures, mistakes, and inconsistencies. It is all because of His kindness and what the King James Bible calls His "long-suffering." He has suffered a lot with me.

That morning I was reading Paul's first letter to his young friend Timothy, and I was struck by something Paul said. In warning Timothy about false teachers in the first chapter, Paul says, "*The goal of this command is love.*" This reminded me, again, that everything about the Christian faith; in fact, everything about God is ultimately about love.

I looked up the word love in my big Nelson's Concordance, and there are hundreds of references. Let me share a very few:

- **God is love.** (1 John 4:8) God's self-description is that His very essence is love.
- In the Old Testament, the Psalmists refer again and again to God's steadfast love, ***His steadfast love endures forever.*** Psalm 103 says, *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear (reverence, respect) him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*
- Paul teaches profoundly about the law, the Ten Commandments, and then he says in Ro. 13:10, ***Love is the fulfillment of the law.*** The reason we Christians are not ruled by God's laws is because we are ruled by His love (hopefully), and if you love someone you are not going to kill him, steal from him, lie to him, etc.
- In Galatians 5 Paul is teaching about the freedom we have in Christ, and he says in Vs. 6 - ***The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*** What an amazing statement!
- Jesus said that the Great Commandment, the greatest commandment of all and that summarized them all is ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and Love your neighbor as you love yourself.***
- The reason we are to love God is because of His great love for us. ***God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*** (John 3:16)
- In the famous "love chapter," 1 Cor. 13, Paul says that we can have power, gifts of healing and faith, enormous authority from God, but if we don't have love it all counts for nothing! Then he describes what love looks like: ***Love is patient, kind, does not envy or boast, is not proud or rude or easily angered, etc.***
- Peter tells husbands and wives to love one another. (**Please note that although love is a fruit of the Spirit and arises from the Holy Spirit who lives within those who are believers - - yet we are commanded to love others, spouse, enemies. Serving and obeying God is always an act of our will. God never works in us or through us except by our permission and cooperation.**)
- John tells us to love one another, and that ***Anyone who does not love remains in death, and Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life!*** (1 John 3:14-15)
- Jesus commands us to ***Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*** He explains that this quality of love is what distinguishes His followers from others. (Matt. 5:43 ff)

So here is the big question for us: "**How are you doing on the love thing?**" You and I understand these teachings, don't we? We have heard them over and over since we have been attending church and reading the Bible. So how are you doing? Jesus said that *Those who hear His words and put them into practice are those who build their house on the rock,*

and those who hear His words and don't do them are those who build on the sand. (Matt. 7) James said that *Faith without works is dead, that Faith itself if it is not accompanied by action is dead.* (James 2)

So God puts the question to us: How are you doing regarding loving people?

Are you loving your spouse? Your children? Your parents? Your in-laws? Your neighbors? Your boss? Your fellow employees? Your pastor? The people at church? Your enemies?

John teaches in the book of 1 John that there are three tests to determine whether one has been born-again: (1) The test of **belief** in Jesus Christ. (2) The test of **obedience** to God's commands in the Bible and to us personally. (3) The test of **love**.

Paul writes, *Test yourself to see if you are in the faith.* (2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 6:4)

Again I ask - - - how are you doing on the love thing?

TELLING OTHERS THE GOOD NEWS

It was an all too common story: the woman's husband was an absolute brute. When he was drunk, which was most of the time; he would curse and beat her. She and her kids literally went hungry many times, and on a few occasions she thought they would starve. He was a sick, wicked man, and only fear kept her with him. Finally, in desperation, she cried out to God to save and deliver her and her children. God heard her prayer and in a remarkable way, one could say a miraculous way, He did deliver them, and she and her children started attending a church and became Christians.

One day her twelve year old son was walking in the neighborhood park and came across a long-haired hippy that was strung out on drugs. The little boy asked, "Mister, do you know Jesus?" The hippy said, "No, tell me about Him." The boy told what he knew and invited him to church. Within a short time the hippy accepted Christ as his Savior, and his life started being transformed.

The hippy was named Bayless Conley, and he is now pastor of Cottonwood Church in Los Angeles. The church has a world-wide ministry. Bayless preaches every Sunday on TBN. (He preaches really well.) It all started through the simple witness of a little boy.

Friends, we have some really good news. It's really good! Let's don't keep it a secret.

THE LATEST ADDICTION

People are prone to getting addicted to something, I suppose because of our fallen nature, and after 50 years in the ministry I have observed that people can become addicted to almost anything. In the July 16th edition of Newsweek, they addressed the subject of "connection addiction." A few quotes: The average teen processes an astounding 3,700 texts a month. This life of continuous connection has come to seem normal, but that's not the same as saying that it's healthy or sustainable, as technology - to paraphrase the old line about alcohol - has become the cause of and solution to all life's problems. Americans have merged with their machines, staring at a screen for at least eight hours a day, more time than we spend on any other activity including sleeping. More than two thirds of these normal, everyday cyborgs, myself included (says the author), report feeling their phone vibrate when in fact nothing is happening. Researchers call it "phantom-vibration syndrome." The director of Semel Institute for Neuroscience argues that the computer is like electronic cocaine, fueling cycles of mania followed by depressive stretches. The Internet leads to behavior that people are conscious is not in their best interest and leaves them anxious and makes them act compulsively. There is strong evidence that Internet addiction contributes to ADHD and OCD disorders.

When the new Manual of Mental Disorders is released next year, Internet Addiction Disorder will be included for the first time. China, Taiwan, and Korea recently began treating such Web use as a grave national health crisis. In those countries, tens of millions of people (as much as 30 percent of teens) are considered Internet-addicted, mostly to gaming, virtual reality, and social media. One young couple neglected its infant to death while nourishing a virtual baby online. A young man fatally bludgeoned his mother for suggesting he log off. At least 10 ultra-Web users have died of blood clots from sitting too long. And in our own country it is reported that most Web users, except for those over the age of 50, check text message, email, or their social network "all the time" or "every 15 minutes." Studies have shown that the brains of Internet addicts look like the brains of drug and alcohol addicts.

To read a serious study on this subject, get Larry Rosen's book, iDisorder. If you have a teen that is getting out of control in this area, please don't continue to ignore it.

GOD IS NOT A CLOCK MAKER OR A FORCE OR A COMPUTER

In the Middle Ages there developed a conception that God was like a clock maker who created the universe, wound it up, and went off to rest while the clock ticked along all by itself. The creation story in Genesis was used to prove that after the six days of creation, God rested. This was interpreted to mean that God's part in creation was over and done. ANNH! WRONG!

God is, not was, the Creator. He is active, involved with His creation and especially with His creatures. He is not like the Buddha, withdrawn into himself, with a bemused, Mona Lisa smile on his face. A few scriptures to consider:

- Psalm 104 - In considering all animate life, the Psalmist writes: *When you send your Spirit, they are created - - when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.* If you have taken a newly born infant into your arms, you have surely experienced awe at this fresh creation of God.
- Isaiah 65:17 - *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.*
- Psalm 102:18 - *That a people not yet created may praise the Lord.*
- John 5:17 - Jesus said, *My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.* NOTE: God is not an impersonal force ("The force be with you.") or an impersonal computer or slot machine or ATM machine, He is a **Person**. He is not a person like we are, He is a Divine Person that is infinitely more than we are. We are made in His image. Can the lesser create the greater? Can an impersonal force or computer create personality?
- Matthew 6:9 - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us to pray, ***Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name***..... NOTE: The Jews had great revelations about God: God is the Creator, the Law Giver, the Judge of all the earth, the Healer, the Deliverer (through Moses), God is Holy, etc. But God was to them YHWH. He was the holy, distant God whose name could not even be uttered. The only access to that God was by striving to keep His laws, which were beyond man to keep. (It has been pointed out that the Law of God is all DEMAND: "You shall do this, you shall not do that." The Grace of God through Christ is SUPPLY: "I will, I will, I will." Thank God we are under grace and not law!) It was Jesus Christ who introduced us to the Creative, Redeeming God as "our Father in Heaven!" He is not impersonal, or mute, or uncaring, or uninvolved. He loves us personally, intimately, more than our own father or mother. Glory to God, our Father!
- God is not only the Creator, He is the **Sustainer**. Actually, it is revealed that God created and sustains the universe through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:1 - *In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

John 1:3 - *Through him (Jesus Christ, the Son, the Word of God) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

Colossians 1:16 - *For by him (Jesus Christ) all things were created; things in heaven and on earth; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.*

MINISTRY

Jim, Roberta, Mary and I ministered in the detention facility at Rifle. Very interesting! We had a lot of opposition. (I tend to interpret negative things that happen as spiritual warfare.) On Friday night an electric pole about a mile or two from the facility burned down, cutting all power. We had to leave midway through our presentation. When we returned for the Saturday morning session, they could not find my paperwork and they said everyone could stay except me - although I had been admitted on Friday night. We reasoned with them (and silently prayed), and the problem went up the chain of command, and after almost an hour they permitted all of us to resume the seminar. PTL!

Then we learned that there was a strong, unbalanced teaching among the inmates, and several of them wanted to argue through the whole session. In spite of it all, we saw a wonderful healing, and two men received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. A number of men were set free from inner bondages.

TRIP TO HAITI - My friends Fred Feller, Lynne Cumming and I are scheduled for a trip to Haiti on September 18th. We will be ministering to about 250 pastors and leaders under the leadership of Marcel Destine', whom I consider to be an apostle, although he is a humble man and does not claim that title. Marcel receives prayer and support from Good Shepherd Church of Loveland, where I pastored. Pastor Kent Hummel and many of the members of Good Shepherd have visited with Marcel and ministered to his people for many years, so I feel very secure in knowing that this is a good man and a good situation. (Frankly, I have had some bad experiences with untrustworthy pastors over the years, so it is important to know something about the people you visit.)

Now I am going to do something I rarely do, which is to ask for your financial help if you able to do so. My friends at Good Shepherd tell me the average cost of a trip to Haiti is around \$1,100 to \$1,200 each. (The cost of the flight alone is \$750) If you could help out in whatever amount the Lord puts on your heart, it would be a great help. My home address is on Page 1, and tax credit information is below.

Blessings to you all,

Glenn

WEBSITE: glennbrownministries.com

I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry.

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