

Psm. 11:3

# Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galations 5:1*

## NEWS LETTER

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### Be Joy-Full!

Instant gratification of the fleshly nature may bring momentary happiness, but only Divinely given Joy can satisfy the soul continually, even eternally. Fullness of joy only comes from having a Right Relationship with Christ!

John 15:11 *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full."*

1 John 1:1-4; "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

1 Peter 1:8; "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:"

Jude 1:24-25; "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." ~ Bro. Donnie Burford

***"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."***

~ Philippians 2:2

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### Of a Special Kind

by Bro. Jeff Short

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

~ Ephesians 5:25~

Being a man often means being wrong in a man-ish sort of way.

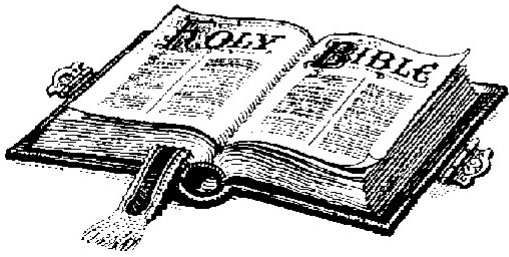
Ephesians 5:22-33 is a glorious passage on marriage that addresses both the husband and the wife. Verse 25 is one of the key verses and well known. We start out, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church," and that's about as far as we get. We then launch into all the ins and outs of ways that Christ loves the church. We unwittingly discourage husbands by painting a picture up high in the sky they cannot possibly reach. And, then what?

Paul made the application in the passage so men would know what it would look like to love this way. Mere mortal husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, meaning they are to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28).

*(Continued on page 25)*

# Sermon

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. II Timothy 4:2



## *“Love Thy Neighbor- Even the Mean One”*

by Bro. John Fry

*Mat 22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,*

*Mat 22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*

*Mat 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

*Mat 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.*

*Mat 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*Mat 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

The scripture noted above is undoubtedly familiar to most of you.

Here we have Jesus being challenged as to choose what is the greatest of the commandments. Something that on the surface would seem difficult considering the more than 600 commandments in the Old Testament. Jesus though quickly responds a commandment of love that comes in two parts. To love God with all our hearts, soul, and mind. The second to love thy neighbor as thyself.

Whether we realize it or not, all the other laws hang on those two statements. When you're reading through Exodus and you start getting into that part about the commandments that in your daily reading seems like it lasts forever, all of those can be broken down into our love for God or our love for our neighbor. The Ten Commandments themselves break down into the very same. The first four are about our love expressed to God. The rest is our love expressed towards others.

That said, we have here a thought by Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves. That is show them the same kind of care and love that you would want others to show you if the situation were

reversed. Now you might say well that isn't hard. I like my neighbors. After all I do live next door to Mom and Dad or maybe you live in the middle of nowhere and have no neighbors to begin with.

Well that is just about the same kind of reasoning the Jews would love to use with this command of love.

But let's look at what Jesus says about who are neighbor is. Turn with me if you would to,

*Luk 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*

*Luk 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

*Luk 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

*Luk 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

*Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*

*Luk 10:34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

*Luk 10:35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

*Luk 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*

*Luk 10:37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

This certain man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho was a Jew. Traveling from place to place alone anywhere was often dangerous as unsuspecting people were often robbed. This fact was especially true down this 17 mile steep and winding drop to Jericho. This was the scenario with our certain man. He was robbed even of his clothes. Beat up and left beside the road.

What is interesting what came next. You see the first thing that took place was a priest came by. I mean if there was anyone that was going to have love and compassion for another it would be a priest right? They were in the business of helping others right? But notice here, this priest doesn't pass by this man and just fail to notice him. No our priest passes by our beaten up fellow countryman and for one reason or another he didn't want to help. Perhaps he thought it would render him unclean or perhaps he thought it to be a trap in which he himself could find himself soon in the same shape. We just don't know his reasoning, but for whatever reason he sees the misery of a fellow brother and yet he passes by.

Now you might say how could the priest do such a thing to leave another stranded and wounded, but again if your mindset is that you only have to do good for your neighbor who lives a hundred yards from your front door your perspective might change. This injured man clearly wasn't a neighbor so why should he care.

Secondly a Levite comes by. Again he sees the wounded man even goes over to get a better look it would seem and yet again this man passes by. Now Jesus in telling this parable, or possibly even true event, uses the examples of a priest and Levite. These are the ones who were employed in the keeping of the temple. The ones you would hope were closest to God. Yet this Levite didn't have any love or compassion for the man as well. Instead he kept on walking.

The man continued to lay there unable to lift himself up and unable to help himself in anyway. His condition was such that he was bleeding and ready to die if no one would help. Then Christ says a Samaritan came by. Now the Samaritan's for those who don't know were kind of Jewish, but kind of not. They had their own way of worship and their own priesthood and they were utterly rejected by the Jews. They were hated. Considered to be the worst of society. They were hated so much that if you were a Jew you wouldn't even walk through the area known as Samaria to get home. You would go the long way around to keep the Samaritan dust off your feet. By the way, the feeling was reciprocal. The Samaritans hated the Jews and confrontations between them were often.

This Samaritan though came by and saw the condition of the man not for who he was but rather for what he needed. The Samaritan knew the injured man was a Jew. That wasn't a mystery and still yet had compassion on him. He took out of his own supplies some oil and wine and poured it in his wounds to clean them up. Took fabric that he had or perhaps even tore up his own clothing to wrap around the wounds to keep him from bleeding. Next, he put the man on the very beast he was likely riding and began to walk alongside of him taking him to a place where he could recover. The Samaritan didn't know the man and didn't owe the man yet paid his bill and guaranteed to pay any other excess when he passed back through if needed. All of this he did willingly not knowing if the man could ever repay his kindness. The Samaritan wasn't in it for reward. He was doing it for one reason only love and compassion towards his fellow man.

When Jesus posed the question who was the real neighbor there was no other choice. Those who were listening to Jesus didn't like to hear that. Obviously, the guy to whom Jesus is speaking didn't even want to say- "the Samaritan." He instead answered, "he that showed mercy." Indeed our Samaritan showed mercy, but the truth is the Samaritan showed love for one that needed it.

Now folks don't miss this point, the Samaritans were enemies of Jews. So when Jesus tells the man to go and do likewise he is really saying the law that says to love your neighbor as yourself extends even to your enemies.

That's right, love your enemies. Love them enough to go out of your way for them. Love them enough to suffer personal loss. Love them as Christ loved us. This is a clear teaching of Christ that cannot be debated.

This of course is not the only time Jesus would teach this principle about loving your neighbor- even the ones you don't like.

Look again to scripture,

*Mat 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

Christ is getting ready to express the same thought and explain the reasoning, but understand from the onset it was never the intention of the law to be degraded into this nature that man should hate another. This is what happens when man gets involved in how to interpret the word of God rather than letting the word of God interpret itself.

*Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

Christ here tells us some of the ways that we should love our enemies. Starting with blessing those that curse us.

Let's take a look at our own lives and go back to the school yard. When you are in school it doesn't take long before you get to that age where you got this little click that doesn't get along with another little click. Sometimes despite your best of attitudes you still end up with that one person that does nothing but want to cause you trouble and spread lies about you.

We think that all goes away with high school. Maybe most of it does, but I'm sure there isn't an adult that hasn't had someone speak half truths about them in effort to spoil their name or to try damage a relationship of one kind or another. It happens and let's just face it when it does the emotion that is stirred within us is not pretty.

You know what we are to do? Punch them in the belly? Spread rumors about them? No! We are to bless them instead of retaliating with the same rhetoric. Don't return evil for evil. Return evil with love.

I know that is not our nature. Our nature is when someone hurts us mentally, physically, emotionally, financially, whatever it might be is to hold ill will. When we hear something bad happens what do we think? "That serves them right. I'm glad they got run over by a bus. I'm glad they got cancer." Now that might sound awful to say out loud, but that is still yet the kind of thing that goes through our minds.

When in truth when we hear something bad has happened we ought to pray for them, their family, and seek to help them just

like we would want ourselves if we have fallen into similar calamity.

Let's continue reading here,

*Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Many years ago a man by the name of Jonathan Edwards penned one of the most famous sermons ever written called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The fact is, God has every right to be angry with creation. He has every right to be so angry with the sin in this world that he would just wrap his hand around the earth and crush it destroying it forever and raise up a new creation that would be free from sin in our place.

But God has a love for this creation of his. A creation made in his own image. A longsuffering love that causes God to bring the good things to his creation. Think about it. The air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink does not just come to the elect of God, but to the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Muslim, and the atheist. Yes God's love transcends even those who are enmity with him.

Christ goes on to say,

*Mat 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

*Mat 5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

*Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

If the love we show towards others is only to those that are just like us, then it isn't saying much about the kind of love that is supposed to identify us to the world. Remember Christ said, *Joh 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

So we are to love this world. Not just those who live in our neighborhood. Not just those who have the same color skin. Not just those who worship the same God. No we are to love the world. All that are in it. Love them like you want to be loved yourself.

So then how do we show our love for this world? A world that hates us and lashes out against us in many cases. I want to begin with this one thought. The first thing we have to do is forgive them of the wrongs they have done to us personally or to our brothers and sisters in Christ or whomever. Now why do I say we have to start there? Because we will never reach out in love to others until we forgive them of wrongs they have done to us or others we love.

Forgiveness is a big subject in the word of God and it is also a hard hitting subject in the word of God. But remember again the example given to us by Christ even as he was on the cross when

he looked down on those that mocked him, those that had beat him, spit on him, those that cast lots at his feet for the garments off his back. Those that did everything in their power to kill a just man.

He said,

*Luk 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

While Jesus was suffering for my sins and forgiving me he was also forgiving those who were doing what they were doing in ignorance. This same example is shown to us in Acts when Stephen was being stoned to death for preaching the truth of Christ when he told God not to lay this sin to their charge.

That's big forgiveness. Why would Stephen have said such a thing? Why not pray for heaping coals upon their heads for doing what they were doing? The answer is love. Stephen had a love for others so much that he desired to see them saved even if it meant losing his life to do it.

Secondly, we can show our love by doing exactly what Jesus alluded to in the story of the Good Samaritan and that is being willing to help others who are need, not just those that believe like we do. Each month our church sends money to the local food bank. I would like it more if we were able to have more direct outreach at Grace to help others.

A few times a year people will pull in usually about the time everyone is leaving and ask for money for food. I have to tell you I'm not big on giving money away to someone who is asking that I know may not possibly be in need, but I am comfortable with giving them food and directing them to the food bank for when they can get more and following up with the food bank to make sure they are taken care of and they have been good to give extra to any that we send their way.

This past year our church participated in Project Homeless where our church gave away hygienic supplies to hundreds of homeless in our community. But not just that! Bibles and tracts as well! It was an eye opening event.

Our annual "yard share" has been a big success the last couple of years. It's an event that looks like a yard sale in many cases, but everything is free to those in need. Our church is located in a very low income area and we have been "cleaned out" three years in a row.

That is some of the things as a church that we do, but there is so much more we can do and so much more we need to do.

As I think about the example of the Good Samaritan and think about the physical health this man was when the Samaritan found him and I think about all the people that Jesus went out of his way to heal, I wonder how we could seek to help the ill in our own community.



This year I would love to see Grace get involved with organizations where we can help provide some comfort to the sick or to those who wait on them. Our church is full of compassionate people that I know could really help to “heal the hurting” who need some help or someone to talk with and what better time is there to be able to sit down with someone that already feels as though you care about them because you have taken the time to reach out than that to share the gospel to the lost or encourage those in Christ.

Now if you haven’t quit reading yet, you like many have probably said Brother John this all sounds a lot like a social gospel that people espouse today. Like our good works are going to get us to heaven. By no means am I suggesting that. James though said he would show his faith by his works and the works he alluded too were the helping of others in need.

I believe that in our Christian lives we ought to go out of our way to be Good Samaritan’s and aid those we can. I believe that as a church we should do the same. But please understand, I the greatest way that you or I can show love to our neighbor and to this world is to share with them the gospel message of Christ.

If your neighbor’s house was on fire with them and their little ones inside would you stand by and let it burn without beating down their door to get them out? You wouldn’t do that even if they are the neighbor with the dog that won’t stay out of your yard and growls at you every morning.

The truth is folks that is the status of many houses across the land. They are hanging over hell’s fire and they need to be told the gospel of a God who loved them so much that he sent his only begotten Son to die for them and whosoever believes in him will receive not just cleansing from their sins but life eternal.

No matter what we do here at this church to help others, no matter what we do as individuals it shouldn’t be separated from also sharing the gospel of Christ.



# Mr. Practical



I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. ||| John 1:4



with Bro. Todd Bryant



## Joyous Love

*“...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” – Philippians 2:2*

The same mind? The same love? Full accord? Of one mind? What kind of teacher was Paul? He wouldn’t be the headliner in many Bible conferences with those “liberal” ideas. In a society where being unique is celebrated – where the most divisive among us is heralded as being the most strong – where the most strangely perverted is viewed as being the most brave, this doesn’t really resonate with us the way it should. Even in churches, I’ve often found myself listening to messages that sought to point out every possible 2<sup>nd</sup> tier doctrinal difference (i.e. tradition) between us to divide even the Lord’s own people. It’s the “I’m right while everybody else is wrong” theology. It’s why the first statements of sermons (or articles) often begin with “Most people in the world today have ‘this or that’ wrong”. There’s certainly a place to correct error and point out truth. But if our entire ministry is built on it, we have set aside the preaching of God’s Word and use the Bible like a drunken man uses a light pole – for propping ourselves up rather than illumination. And honestly, as I read the Bible through, I find out time after time that I definitely do not have it all figured out.

Paul wanted his joy to be completed in these people. This would be done only if they sought unity in truth and in action. You cannot have true love without truth. Love *“does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6)*. The flip side of that doctrinal coin is that “truth” without love is viewed exactly the same by God – *“And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am*

*nothing*” (1 Corinthians 13:2). Those ministering through God’s Word must preach in a way that seeks to unite people in love and truth. We cannot rightly preach if both characteristics are not present in us. This certainly was Paul’s desire for these saints. If this were accomplished, it would produce a completed joy in Paul’s heart. The same could be said of any elder in any church today if he is approaching his ministry properly.

But this verse is not without context. Whatever we do, let us make sure we get the whole picture here. Paul paints a vivid backdrop for this verse with the surrounding context that will certainly promote the seeking of a joyous love through a unifying truth. In fact, our text verse is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of a thought. The entire sentence reads, “*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*” The doctrine of Jesus Christ is an encouraging doctrine to believers. It is good news (i.e. Gospel) to us – good news that should unite us all in the same cause. Again, there is no suggestion that we sacrifice truth for unity. But nonetheless, believers should be unified in love for one another. Saints that have the Spirit of God dwelling in them should be encouraged and comforted in love. We should be full of affection and sympathy for one another. Such an attitude among God’s people is the fruit of the Spirit and will bring joy to any under-shepherd who sees his flock exhibiting such an interest in one another.

If we are to be unified in a joyous love for one another, we must put aside our natural selfish tendencies. Certainly, “*concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another*” (1 Thessalonians 4:9), but our natural inclination towards selfishness remains. Knowing this, Paul instructs the believers in Philippi, “*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*” Certainly, Paul understood our natural inclination towards selfishness. Without a doubt, I’ve seen nothing more than selfish demands for “my way” (though certainly disguised by its label – “the truth”) split churches right down the middle. Anything from the method we use to collect tithes to the proper place for the song leader to stand have been used to divide while the main focus of the glory of Christ and the preaching of God’s Word are set aside. If we are to have this joyous love that Paul is explaining, we must “*count others more significant than [ourselves]*”. We must look out for the “*interests of others*”. Church isn’t about me. Theologically, we understand that. Practically, we struggle with it. “Stand for something if you have

to stand by yourself”, we proclaim loudly and often. But, as believers, we need to make sure that “something” is the Word of God and nothing more. Again, truth unifies in a joyous love when it’s proclaimed properly.

Paul doesn’t leave us without an example. He calls as witness the only perfect example of such a love that has ever been displayed. “*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...*”, he writes. We are called to be Christ-like. We were predestined to be Christ-like (Romans 8:29). In “*Antioch the disciples were first called Christians*” because their lives reflected the life of Jesus (Acts 11:26). Thus, Christianity should be that “movement” that best reflects the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. If we are to produce a joyous love by our actions, then our actions must reflect those of our great Founder and Leader.

Paul continues – “*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*” Before this world was created, Jesus was God (John 1:1). He is as much divine as the Father and the Holy Spirit. God has always been a Trinity and always will be. Jesus had every right associated with being God. Yet, for some 30+ years, He willingly set aside His rights as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person in the Trinity and became a man. Not only was His glory set aside (John 17:5), but also suffered in human flesh in order to save His own from their sins. He had every right, as God, to cling to that which was justly His own – but He didn’t. He “*emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant*”. God Himself stepped out of eternity for a moment in time and became a man – a servant of men.

Jesus said, “*You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:42-45). Paul is affirming the same truth in Philippians that Jesus spoke about Himself during His personal ministry. That is, if God Himself became a servant of men, it is our duty to do the same. Jesus put His own interests aside and looked out for the “*interests of others*” – of us!! He is the perfect picture of loving people with the truth – a ministry that properly produces a joyous love. The

writer of Hebrews wrote, “...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus “endured the cross” – He didn’t enjoy it. It was an act of service for His own. He did it for others. It is this type of attitude Paul is seeking to teach the saints in Philippi – be like Jesus...love with a self-sacrificing love...love with the truth...love in a unifying manner...produce a joyous love by your actions of service for one another.

The divisive hatred that we often see in the name of Christ is supposed to be a thing of our past. Paul wrote to Titus “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another” (Titus 3:3). Hate is an attribute of who we were in Adam, not who we are in Christ. “Strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions” – these are all works of the flesh (Galatians 5:20). We may somehow validate them in our minds as boldness or zeal, but God’s Word defines them otherwise. Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). If this is the way people identify us as the disciples of Jesus, I’d suggest we are often identified as something else.

Truth must be fought for. Where there is no truth, there is no true love. But the flip side of that remains – where there is no love, there is no real truth. Paul’s lesson to the saints at Philippi must become his lesson to us. As we seek to share the truth with the world, let us love one another with the self-sacrificing joyous love of Jesus so the world may truly know we are His disciples.



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## The Forum

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:  
~ Proverbs 1:5



Questions and Answers to help the believer make sense of our sin filled & confusing world

## Concepts about Love & Joy

**The world has mantras such as "you have to love yourself before you can love others" "you can't help who you love" "do what makes you happy" etc. How do these ideas contrast to what the Word teaches on love and joy?**

**Bro. Jason Shults (Associate pastor Beverly Manor Baptist Church Washington, IL/Dean of Illinois Baptist College):** To answer these questions, let’s start by saying we seem to have forgotten that love is a Christian word and is defined by Scripture. We use the word love to describe so many various things that it becomes almost meaningless.

- It is a rock band from the 1960s.
- It is a really bad score in tennis.
- It is a description of what was “made” during an immoral one-night-stand.
- It is how I feel about peanut butter cookies.

We’ve just made nonsense of this word and so it’s little wonder people are confused by it.

The writers of the New Testament used the Greek language and had several words to describe different aspects of the same general idea of love.

They had the word “eros” first. We get our word “erotic” from eros. It is describing sexual attraction. Obviously, the writers of the New Testament did not incorporate that word into their ideal of Christian love. Eros has its place, but the preconceived notions that people had when that word is used didn’t fit their need when writing.

There is the word “phileo” which loosely means “friendship.” The idea there is affectionate regard. We find this word used many times in the New Testament, but by far not the majority of

times. For example, Jesus loved – had affectionate regard for – His friend Lazarus and wept over his death. The reason, I think, that this word is often inadequate for the Christian purpose is that Christians are supposed to love even people for whom we have no affectionate regard, such as enemies.

They also had the word “storgay” which isn’t talked about much. It essentially is family love. Fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters (and sometimes even our weird cousins!) love one another. This word is only used once in the Bible and that is in combination with phileo – that warm regard. Paul says in Romans 12:10 we are to be “kindly affectionate” one to another. So Christians also have that family love because we are a family.

But there was this word in Greek that was seldom used. Because of the rare usages, there were no great preconceived ideas about what it meant. The writers of the New Testament picked up this word “agape” and ran with it. It is interpreted “charity” in many places and that is certainly a fair way to look at this word for love. It is a love that unselfishly gives.

It is agape love that seeks the highest good of the one loved, even to the point of self-sacrifice. I’ve always liked the definition my friend Weldon Frazier gave before he died. (I do not know where Brother Frazier got it, but I know I got it from him!) He said love is “that which desires and actively seeks the best for its object even at great personal cost.” It is what God showed us when He sent his only Son into the world to die on the cross for our sins.

Love is not just a feeling, then. Love is active. Love feels, yes, but it also moves and breathes and determines and behaves and chooses and operates. Think of the famous passage of Paul on love in 1st Corinthians 13. He is not just describing love as a concept, but also the behavior of loving people. It isn’t about how a person feels, it is about how a person behaves.

One good tool to ask yourself if you are displaying love is try to replace the word “charity” in the passage with your own name and see how ridiculous it sounds. “Jason suffers long? Jason is kind? Jason seeks not his own? Jason bears all things?” What a failure I am!

The idea “you have to love yourself before you can love others” is inaccurate. You have to love God before you can love others! Otherwise, what you call love is actually tainted by sin and selfishness. Without the guidance of God you’ll rarely do the best for others at cost to yourself – you’ll serve yourself at the expense of others.

But Jesus said, “love one another as I have loved you.” The

ultimate example of self-sacrificing love tells us that, because He loved us, we are to love others. Love in word and feelings, but also in deeds. Love, not in expectation of something in return, but selflessly. Love even though its going to hurt from time to time. Love even though the object of your love does nothing to deserve it. Love because God is love and love comes from Him. Love because that love first came to you and you want to be like Him.

**Bro. Jeff Short (Pastor of Charleston Baptist Congregation in Charleston, WV):** The Bible does talk about loving yourself in the law (Leviticus 19:18), which is referred to by Jesus (Matthew 19:19; 22:39-40), Paul (Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14), and James (James 2:8). The secular concept of loving yourself, so prevalent in culture today, is all about self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image. In other words, it’s a love that is all about internal emotion and psychology that is self-directed. These concepts are completely absent from the Bible. The loving yourself God spoke of in the law is clearly defined when we look at the whole context (Leviticus 19:9-18). God is instructing how to love your neighbor by leaving the gleanings for your poor neighbors, not stealing from them, not swindling them, not lying to them, and so on. God is saying, “This is how you love your neighbor,” and he summarizes it all in the statement in verse 18: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” So when God speaks of loving yourself in this context, he means loving yourself in the sense of the golden rule (Luke 6:31). You don’t want someone to do those things to you, so don’t do them to someone else. Simple.

Paul also referred to loving yourself in a different context. Paul taught husbands to love, cherish, and nourish their wives as they love their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28-29). Though it is a different context, it’s easy to see Paul has exactly the same meaning as the golden rule. He is only applying it to marriage. Loving yourself refers to the care you take of yourself, the attentiveness you have to your own needs, etc. The biblical concept of love is the action you do. God loved, he gave his Son (John 3:16). Jesus loved, he laid down his life (John 15:13).

Paul taught that love is the greatest virtue (1 Corinthians 13:13). A righteous love will not seek its own, i.e. do whatever makes you happy (1 Corinthians 13:5). A righteous love finds joy in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6). I’m not suggesting that the biblical concept of love does not involve the emotions, or feelings. It most certainly does. Biblical love involves and affects our feelings, but it is not purely about or driven by feelings like worldly love.





## *“Follow Your Heart”*

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

Often the advice is given, “follow your heart.” And a great many people are doing just that. In doing this people only achieve a touch of fleeting happiness. What is worse they never arrive at lasting joy and peace with God. The Bible has much to say about the human heart. None of it good. For instance the Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). It also says, “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness,” (Proverbs 14:13).

A person who follows their heart only heaps trouble to himself. The Lord Jesus said: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies,” (Matthew 15:19). In addition to displeasing God, evil thoughts of all sorts produce sorrow to others and to self. Murders bring joy neither to the victim, his family nor to the murderer and his family. Adulteries and other sexual sins often ruin marriages, result in diseases, consume savings, break up families and do harm to children. Stealing, lying and blaspheming God only bring sorrow to all affected by these things. So why do people continue following their hearts? The answer is found in Jeremiah 13:23: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” People cannot stop doing these sinful things! They go on following their own deceitful and desperately wicked hearts. All this brings more sorrow to them while here on earth – and stores up judgment in the world to come.

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,”* - this was the prayer of the Psalmist, (Psalm 51:10). God is able to give sinners a new heart as He said in Ezekiel 36:26: *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”* Such a supernatural work must be accomplished by God. Men cannot change their hearts. They are in bondage to them. Obedience to wicked hearts only produces fleeting pleasure followed by emptiness and sorrow. The only solution is to be “born again.” This new birth is necessary for salvation. It includes receiving the new heart mentioned above. The Lord Jesus said, “Marvel not that I said

unto thee, Ye must be born again,” (John 3:7). Only God can do this. Your will cannot bring it to pass. The Bible makes that clear in John 1:13 where we read: “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Stop trusting in yourself, in religion, in your works or in your attempts to be obedient to the Bible. Only God can birth you into His family. You are shut up to that fact.

## *“Charismatic Chaos”*

by Bro. Lewis Kiger

(Sermon delivered August 4, 2012

Gladwin MI)



### Acts 2:1:4

This is such a huge subject; I can do no more than just hit a few of the high points, or rather low points, and press on. This is the kind of sermon that people are prone to laugh when you mention certain things or certain people, but this is not funny, no not in the least. If you think it is funny, then you begin to study it in depth and see if you do not have serious opposition.

I am going to mention some names, (I don’t do a whole lot of name calling, but I am going to do some today)...and when I do you may be prone to mock, but this is no laughing matter.

Don’t be prideful, don’t be haughty that God has brought you where you are. Don’t be arrogant, for none of us know where we might be at this very hour were it not for the grace of God.

The Charismatic movement is the child of Pentecostalism. While there are some differences to be found between them, they are essentially the same, and in particular when it comes to the idea of perpetual supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Today we find it difficult to distinguish between the two groups.

Pentecostals typically align themselves with a particular denomination, or rather a non-denomination (such as the Assemblies of God, Church of God, or the assembly over here in Gladwin called the Living Waters Christian Church of Gladwin). The Charismatic movement has spread beyond the walls of the Holiness Assemblies and there is a growing number of Charismatic practice and theology sprinkled among many different denominations.

There is Episcopalian Charismatics.

Catholic Charismatics.

Even Calvinist Charismatics.

But it is all Pentecostal theology. It is all relatively new. The movement itself is a little more than a hundred years old, all the while the Lord’s true NT Landmark churches have been earnestly contending for the faith as it was once delivered.

I would suppose that many of us here, have some very good friends, or perhaps even family members who were or still are involved in the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement. One of my oldest friends is a Pentecostal Pastor.

The things that I intend to teach on are in no way an attack on any individual.

No doubt God uses the preaching of the Gospel to call out sinners in this movement as He Sovereignly does in other false organizations, but this is in spite of what they teach and not because of it.

We can have individual fellowship with anyone who is saved and born again by the Amazing Grace of God, however corporately, or in a church capacity we must more closely limit our fellowship.

It must be acknowledged that there is a tremendous amount of chaos and confusion in the Charismatic movement.

1. Their prominent teachings are Not Based on the Bible:

The main tenants of the Charismatic movement are not Scripturally Sound. One would find it difficult to know where to begin when defining the widespread number of heresies that are prevalent.

I am not speaking of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of water baptism, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, for in truth these doctrines are secondary to what is more prominently preached and emphasized in the Pentecostal/Charismatic assemblies.

But let us begin with the foremost assertion of the Movement:

That is that the Gifts of the Apostolic Age are still widespread today:

- i. Speaking in tongues.

Speaking in tongues as it is found in the NT only occurred in 3 different places and times.

The day of Pentecost in Jerusalem.

The house of Cornelius in Caesarea.

When Apostle Paul scripturally baptized the 12 believers in Ephesus.

There is no Scriptural support for the Charismatic idea of a continual re-baptism of the Holy Ghost made manifest by speaking in tongues...or in other words...we find no evidence that in the city of Jerusalem, or anywhere else that the gift was manifested that it ever happened again.

I am not convinced that ever took place in Corinth, there is no Scriptural evidence that it did, and the overwhelming evidence is that what takes place today is in no way a reflection of what took place in these 3 events.

One would think by the prominence placed on it by the Charismatics that it is one of the most prominent events of the NT.

The manner in which it is done today is totally foreign to the Scriptures. What takes place today is in no way a reflection of what took place in the book of Acts.

The word tongues, simply means language.

**Acts 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues (OTHER LANGUAGES), as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Keep reading and you will find that the men and women gathered heard what was spoken in their own native tongue or language.

The jibber-jabber that is displayed today, is nothing like what took place on Pentecost.

Well thought out platitudes are often used to justify their experiences and make it all sound real spiritual, but it is not.

*This is Holy Ghost language. This is spiritual language, this is the language of angels...it is not. It is at best the flesh, and at worst the work of our enemy.*

*Some years ago, when talking to a Charismatic brother in Christ, he accused me of blasphemy of the Holy Ghost...by saying that this was silly and anti-scriptural.*

The level of one's spirituality is based upon the ability to speak in tongues, the awareness of new and unyielding revelations from God. "holy laughter" might be funny if it were not so frightening.

Being slain in the Spirit. Speaking in tongues. Handling snakes, drinking poison...

Divine healing by the laying on of hands.

What is termed as supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, were all temporal gifts given to authenticate the work of God.

There are no modern day apostles. There is no super-natural spiritual plane that we can elevate to that will free us from all poverty and physical affliction.

Emotionalism is key to holding a Charismatic audience.

One would have difficulty telling the difference between the flesh feeding music of an NBA game and that of your average Charismatic Church.

***Preacher didn't even preach.***

**Matthew 12:38-39**

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Gifts were given for a season for a reason.

These gifts are no longer necessary to authenticate the true work of God.

**1 Corinthians 13:8-10**

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

- 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.  
10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Although there are many well meaning men and women who are involved in the charismatic movement...one must be assured that many of their practices are anti-scriptural.

What thus saith the Lord has often been set aside for **personal experience.**

The Bible is the Supreme Revelation of who God is, and how He works. The Spirit of God, regardless of what these men and women may think...will not, He does not lead contrary to the Word of God.

The Spirit of God always works according to the Word and leads according to the Will of God.

– The role of women

There are no God called women preachers.

Joyce Meyer was never called by God to preach the gospel.

While I realize this is not popular in today's society, and perhaps there are even those here who would not agree...but one of the evidences that this movement is wrong is the prominent role of women in the service.

Women preachers. Women evangelists. Women Apostles. Women hold a high honor in the service of God, but not in preaching or pastoring.

*Hey, if I can get my healing from a woman who are you to say it is wrong.*

Some women say that they have been called by God.

That since men no longer will act like men, then God now uses women.

God the Holy Spirit does not lead contrary to His Word.

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Some woman says she feels as nudge within her...and that must be God calling her...it is not so.

**1 Corinthians 14:32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

While I am convinced that there are spirits involved in the going-ons of these assemblies, I do not believe it to be the Holy Spirit.

I am hesitant to delve into this at any depth, for those of you who have studied into the spirit world, the battle for supremacy in the angelic world; know the trouble that it stirs.

However if one carefully considers the harm done to the cause of Christ. The honor that is stolen from His Name. The sheep that

are led astray and the extreme confusion that is stirred, one must readily admit that there are powers at work here beyond the mortal.

There are supernatural powers at work to further this cause. I am certainly not saying that saved men or women are demon possessed, but I am asserting that they are unwittingly involved in the realm of the Satanic.

2. The Prominent leaders of the Charismatic movement take advantage of people:

**2 Peter 2:1-3**

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

– The merchandise made of men and women.

I don't understand how people can be so easily misled.

One identifying characteristic of a false prophet is his continual appeal for money.

I know of no other group that seeks to fleece the sheep as do the charismatics.

Why can't people see through these charlatans? And I don't mind whistle-blowing on these wolves.

*Just plant one little seed, just a 50 dollar seed will yield tremendous spiritual fruit in your life.*

*If that be true, why don't they just go and plant their own seeds and quit asking people for theirs?!?!*

*It would be funny if it weren't so sad...*

- o Prominent modern day pretenders/imposters/fakes/frauds/con artists.

Men who take this name are wolves in sheep's clothing.

They are like wolves who sense weakness or despair and take advantage of it.

These charlatans take advantage of desperate situations and prey on the weak or elderly.

You don't have to tell me, I deliver US mail, I know who these men prey on.

*Kay Fullins sending money in seeking a cure for cancer...*

While it would be easy to pick out names and sit back and laugh at the erroneous views of some of the more prominent members of the Charismatic movement, the last end of many of these is no laughing matter.

There are many good, godly saints who are misled, mis-taught, and in some measure wasting their lives in service to their Saviour in these false organizations.

And further there are many who are ultimately deceived. They are lost. They are undone, they have never known salvation...but

they have had some extravagant experience to which they have entrusted their eternal soul.

It would be easy to lump all men and the foremost names in the Pentecostal/Holiness movement into one big rotten bunch, it would be unfair to do so.

As it is with all denominations, there are differing theologies and differing extremes.

Not all are as bold or brazen as Oral Roberts. Not all are as heretical as Benny Hinn. Not all have the following and devotion of TD Jakes, but they all have one thing in common...and that is that they are all heretics to some degree, and they are all dangerous.

Rod Parsley

Joyce Meyer

Kenneth Copeland

Paula White

Jessie Duplantis

Benny Hinn said *"I'm telling you, I can feel the anointing talking here. People are going to be canceling funeral services and bringing their dead in their caskets, placing them- my God! I feel the anointing here- placing them before a television set, waiting for God's power to come through and touch them. And it's going to happen time and time -so much it's going to spread. You're going to hear it from Kenya to Mexico to Europe to South America, where people will be raised from the dead. So much so that the word will spread that if some dead person be put in front of this TV screen, they will be raised from the dead"*

*\*Well I can learn a lot from them. They have some pretty good messages.*

*\*Joyce Meyer is good on emotional healing and counsel for women,.*

*\*Rod Parsley is entertaining.*

*\*TD Jakes has some good sermons.*

***You would be best to leave them alone.***

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

This text sounds more to me like the modern charismatic and Pentecostal movement than any other.

We would be hard pressed to find any group of people anywhere who more accurately fit this red-letter description of these men and women.

- JOYCE MEYER – bright shining star of the Charismatic movement

The name and the blood of Jesus is called upon by many of them in an unholy, unscriptural manner.

*"We must learn to 'use' the blood" (ibid., pg. 109).*

*"We laid hands on the check and prayed. I went and got all of our checkbooks and my pocketbook and Dave got his wallet and we laid hands on them and put the blood on them, asking God to protect our money, to cause it to multiply and to see to it that Satan could not steal any of it from us" (ibid.).*

- It is said that Benny Hinn receives some 100 million dollars a year in donations.

Some of the most erroneous claims are made by the prominent members of this movement, which are rarely held accountable for.

*Tomorrow the sky will turn pink, and purple clouds will spew forth orange raindrops....and if you will just support my ministry I will pray that God rains down a double blessing on you.*

If you think I am exaggerating listen to this...this is a quote from a letter written by one of the more prominent members of the Charismatic movement to one of his would be victims/supporters. Enclosed in his letter was a free package of "miracle spring water."

*This packet contains water from the spring in Southern Russia where the pastors and Christians were led by the Holy Spirit to drink during the horrible Chernobyl nuclear accident. (I warn you, something so anointed and sacred can't be taken lightly). As I walked to this very spring through the dark dawn... when I got there, it was like a light from Heaven lighted up the entire area. As I knelt trembling under the awesome presence of God the Angel of the Lord commanded me to bring this Miracle Spring Water back for you to use as a powerful point of contact for many miracles in your lives.*

- 1. Anoint your forehead with this miracle water for total peace of mind.*
- 2. Anoint your hands for MONEY MIRACLES in Jesus name.*
- 3. Anoint your body wherever you feel pain.*
- 4. Then anoint the doorposts of your house with this miracle water for protection from all evil.*
- 5. Send me your prayer requests (on back) **along with your best gift to God.** When I get this sheet back I will know that you have obeyed God's instructions and acted in obedience. I will then release a prophets anointing for you!*

The sad part about all this is that this kind of foolishness is as common among their ranks...this particular letter was sent to a confessed lost person who just used it to further their abhorrence of all things Christian.

This is only one example of the ridiculous and destructive claims/lies made by these false prophets who are to make money and care nothing for the souls of men.

Peter Popoff was found with an earpiece in his ear and his wife and staff feeding him information that made him look like he was a Prophet of God.



All of these make all of us look bad, but more importantly it makes Christianity look bad. It gives great occasion of the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

Sometimes it can be frustrating when you preach the truth and drive a Toyota, when men and women who spill out vile heresy are flying around the world in their private jets. But when looked at with eternity as the wallpaper, things are not so bad.

Stay away and serve the Lord in His NT Church

## *“Modesty Is Important”*

by Sis. Wendy Bryant

*(originally published in her blog: Running With the Pastor  
<http://runningwiththepastor.weebly.com/>)*



A while back I wrote an article about modesty. It all was spurred by a lady writing an article on girl's lack of modesty at a university sporting event. The following is my thoughts on modesty.

First: IF your lady parts are showing you are underdressed. I don't care if it's "fashionable" or if it's hot outside. It's wrong. The world view is not the correct view.

Second: If you have declared yourself a Christian then you shouldn't want to dress like that. You can dress cute, fashionable, modern and modest without showing off your lady parts. The Lord didn't make your body to be on exhibit for everyone to see. No Godly husband wants the world to see what is intended for him to see in private. I'm not talking about wearing a berka, I'm talking about keeping the midsection and lady parts under wraps!!!! And ladies - once it's on social media it can be found at a later date. Social media never forgets or forgives!!!!

Third: When you are at a family-friendly activity like a public sporting event you do not have the right to dress like you want to. Not only is it disrespectful to yourself but it's disrespectful to everyone around you. We have lost the ability to respect our neighbor because we feel "I have rights and I will not let you tell me what to do." Just because you "can" do something doesn't always mean you should (I Cor. 6:12 "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful."). It's just general respect for other humans. Every aspect of your life has some kind of dress code. Stores have signs "no shirt no shoes no service" - that's a dress code. You respect that dress code why not respect the unwritten dress code of being out in public.

Fourth: We can't expect the un-Christian to act like a Christian. They don't care!!! They have a depraved heart, such as I did when I wasn't saved. They need love, and if they ask you what you think, tell them in love - true love not "I'll set them straight." Maybe they just have never been taught better. (1 Cor 13: 1, 13 "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.)

Fifth: It also has NOTHING to do with "don't show your ankles or the boys will get excited." It has everything to do with respect. If we teach our boys to respect ladies and we teach our girls to respect themselves, this will be a moot point. (in countries where girls/ladies are fully clothed - head to toe - they are abused and no ankles were shown)

Sixth: If you don't want to be grouped with a certain population of people based on your dress (or lack thereof), then don't dress that way. It is not a judgement issue. Everyone bases their opinions on what they see. You dress like a "lady of the night" then people will assume you are of that reputation. Is it fair, maybe not, but do you want people to think that way about you anyway? When you are out in public people don't have time to get to know you, so do your best to give them a good first quick impression. (not the kind where someone is truly judging you because you aren't dressing fancy)

There is a fine line in everyone having their own responsibility – it doesn't belong to just the guy or just the girl. It's a group effort. Take responsibility for your own actions.

Last but not least: The Lord knew what He was doing by not giving me and The Pastor a daughter. Bless her heart if He had!!!!



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## Bible Jocks

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

1 Corinthians 9:24



## What Do You Love?

by Bro. Troy McGahan



My hope was to have an interview with our local High School football Coach that has guided our local team to two straight undefeated State Championship seasons. However because of his incredibly busy teaching and offseason training schedule we will try to have it next issue.

However, this issue we will talk a little bit about love. Now that may seem weird in a "sports" article but, I want us to consider the subject. Most sports fans use the term love pretty loosely. We talk about a particular play we say, "Did you see what the QB did, I loved that play." Or we will talk about our team and say that we love the team we cheer for or we love a Coach or player.

My thought for the next bit is this, what or who we love speaks volumes about who we are. I can immediately tell you what your interests are in the first hour of meeting you. You know how? By what you talk about. For instance if we are talking about College athletics you will quickly figure out I am a UK fan. Why is that? Because I will talk about them the majority of the time with a smattering of Bama football and Liberty University but, my main loyalty lies with the BBN (Big Blue Nation).

My question is this today, in your general everyday conversation who or what do you talk about? Is it family? Friends? Job? If so and you profess faith in Christ, that is a problem. While it's great to love family, friends and your job. God and the things of God (The gospel, Church, service to him) should always be our priority. Jesus tell us in Matthew 6:33 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." If are seeking Him first, then that points out to who our love is for and our priorities. So while sports is ok, let's not love them over our Lord.



## "Joy Brings Rejoicing!"

by Bro. Donnie Burford

Psalm 118:24; "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."; (NO MATTER

WHAT It May Bring!)

Pleasant circumstances may bring you Happiness, But only Joy can bring Rejoicing!

While our happiness may come and go, it being dependent upon the ever changing outward circumstances and experiences of life, and whether they are pleasant or not, Biblical Joy can and should be an ever present and continual condition. And that because it is founded upon a never changing internal and eternal relationship with Christ. The Greater our understanding of Christ and the truths concerning our relationship with Him, the Greater our joy and rejoicing will be, 'no matter what' the circumstances of life may bring! No, life may not always bring us happiness, but in Christ we can always have Joy and Rejoice!

**Philippians 4:4-7;** "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"

**Hebrews 12:1-2;** "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

**Romans 5:1-2, 11;** "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

**Vs.11;** "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

**1 Peter 1:8;** "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:"

**John 15:11;** "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

**Romans 14:17;** "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

**2 Co 6:10;** "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing;..."

**Nehemiah 8:10;** "... for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

**1 Thessalonians 5:16;** "Rejoice evermore."

# Labor In Love



"The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin."  
Proverbs 10:16



## *All God's Creatures*

Hello, my name is Sharon Rose Long, I live in Pekin Indiana. Pekin is located northwest of Louisville , Kentucky. We have nine acres of land so I am able to keep my animals here with me. I am a member of Providence Baptist Church, which is located in Louisville. My husband Kenneth and my son Benjamin are also members there. We go on Sunday and spend the day there, also on Wed. nights we have a service. It is a wonderful blessing to be able to serve the Lord in one of His churches. My husband Kenneth is the pastor of our church. We have a great group of God's children meeting there with us. We have been at Providence for eleven years. God has been so good to us. Right now I have two horses and a pony , I am not sure how many chickens I have, maybe around thirty. I have eight cats and two dogs. I know some people may not count chickens as pets but I like my chickens. I try to take them a special treat everyday. They love bread. As far as taking care of the animals, one of my horses ( Twilight ) is twenty years old now and I have had him since he was born. For all these years he has been fed twice a day.

If you have animals you have to be committed to taking care of them as best as you can. I have always had pets except for the time we spent in Nigeria as missionaries. And when we went to Russia I took my dog with me. The Russians liked dogs so it worked out well. I would say a large portion of my life has been spent taking care of my animals. One of my favorite scriptures is, *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.* As a teenager I had many animals. Cows, horses, ponies, ducks chickens, cats and dogs. After Kenny and I got married we even had four rheas , that was quite an adventure. Rheas are a large , flightless bird that comes from South America. They are smaller than the Emu and ostrich. The female lays large eggs in a nest and the male sits on them. It was very interesting but we never got to see them hatch. A stray dog got in the field with them and killed and injured the males. That put an end to raising rheas.

Over the years I have rescued animals by adopting from the animal shelter and getting kittens off of the busy street and keeping them. It seems now the animals just find me. Our cat Cuddles just came here one day a few years ago and we just love him. Then Orange boy came and I had to get him fixed, then Tom

Cat came and at first he didn't want us to even see him, he was wild. Then he started coming up to eat with my cats. Then he started to let me pet him and now he is the sweetest boy and wants in the house when it gets cold. I had to get him fixed too. It is better for the cat to be fixed. Then they don't have to fight anymore. I also found four hens that moved down here and were roosting in a low tree. I got them before the coons found them . they are safe in my chicken house. And we have recently adopted a puppy from a family who had a litter of unwanted puppies. I named her Jade, she has beautiful green eyes. Animals are a long time commitment and a wonderful gift from God.



(Sis. Long and Jade the Puppy)

Last spring , the feed store had lots of chicks and they had them on sale so I bought quite a few and raised them in the house until they were big enough to go in the chicken house with the older chickens. You have to be careful adding young chickens in with older birds as they may kill them. Now my chicks are grown up and laying eggs. We like to eat eggs for breakfast. I also sell eggs to other people as they are glad to get fresh eggs. I enjoy





collecting the eggs.

Other benefits from having pets is the joy they bring into your life. Nathan and I used to go trail riding together and we enjoyed this very much. My horse twilight has gone completely blind so we can't ride on the trails anymore. But my grandchildren like to ride him around in the yard and they ride Dillion and the pony Millie. I got my horse Dillion when he was three weeks old in 1997 the same year my son Benjamin was born. The man who owned Dillion's mother rented his mares out to other people who used them as nurse mares to foals who had lost their mothers or if the mothers were unable to care for their own babies. Sad for Dillion as he was not weaned and his mother was taken away. The man brought him to me and I had to bucket feed him milk for several months. But he did really well, he is over sixteen hands tall and my son Nathan has enjoyed riding him over the years. I got Millie in 2007 for Benjamin on his 10th birthday. I can't believe it will be ten years since I bought her. Time sure flies by.



Sis. Long's grandson, Titus, riding her horse, Dillan

Animals are fun to have but there are hard times when they get sick or when it comes time for them to leave this world. They belong to God and He watches over them. Do I think my love for animals and ability to care for them is a gift from God? Yes, I sure do and it is a blessing to me. It seems I can understand some what of what they are saying but I can't always save them I sure do try . God is in control of their lives just as He is in control of our lives. In the book of Job, God speaks about the animals and on the day that He made them , He saw that it was good. I believe God, it is good.



(Sis. Long and her dog, Melodie, who was born without eyes)

***Do you have any advice for others thinking about getting involved with rescuing animals?***

That is kind of a hard question. I think we all can have a part in this just by being kind to all of God's creatures and teaching our children to have respect for life . this does not mean we can't use and eat the animals . But we should not be cruel . I think a good example is Noah and his family , they took care of the animals on the ark. We can all have a part even if it is just feeding the birds. God sees all that we do , let it be pleasing to Him.



*(even wild animles come to Sis. Long's door)*





## *“Love Improvement at Lowe’s”*

by Bro. Jeff Short

*In which I tell a true story.*

An older couple stood in front of Lowe’s arguing. He insisted they could not go in the door they were in front of because the sign said, “Exit.” With purse strap over the shoulder and purse clasped tightly under her arm, the old woman claimed that sign didn’t matter and they could go in there. The old man gripped his cane handle tighter. His bottom teeth met the front of his upper lip and his eyes squinted as though he were looking into the sun. He muttered to himself and drifted toward the door that had the sign that read, “Enter.”

I wondered at this sight and several questions came to my mind. How long had they been married? How many cycles of this standoff had they been through before I arrived? Had they always bickered this way or was there a time when they would have smiled and walked through the door hand-in-hand paying little heed to instructional directions? When had love cooled?

To many this exchange seems trivial. Some would think nothing of this kind of fussing and maybe even think it endearing. Perhaps, but we will never know more about these two so I think it’s best to use their momentary conflict as an occasion to think on love. I’m not thinking of marital love particularly, but rather the love we are to have for one another.

Do we really need to be told we should love one another? We could probably find something about it in every genre of Scripture. It’s in the law (Leviticus 19:18). It’s in the Gospels (Matthew 22:39). It’s in the epistles (James 2:8). It’s impossible to read the Bible without encountering it.

Most of us are innately sensible of a need to show and receive love. Unless we have hardened conscience over time through self-centered living, we feel the pangs when we fail to love someone as we should. Aside from the natural instincts though we actually learn who and how we are to love in God’s Word.

### **Real love**

Paul wrote to the Roman Christians about loving one in another in Romans 12:9-16. He wrote that love should be genuine, without hypocrisy. He used a word for love in verse 9 that means a benevolent affection, a love that is outward focused and giving.

In verse 10 he used a word that refers to the cherishing of kindred, a strong familial love, for the love we are to have for one another. He expressed a number of characteristics of the love we are to have.

He used a word in verse 11 that is translated “fervent.” It means to boil and so conveys the thought of heat and energy. He contrasted it with being slothful and gives us the image of a love that is hot and energetic.

### **Love thermometer**

Water is made to boil by applying heat and, if removed from the heat source, it will eventually cool to room temperature. Our love will also cool if it is not stirred and kept hot. How do we know if our love is cooling off?

I have devised a test from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 to help diagnose love growing cold. This chapter gives us one of the greatest descriptions of brotherly love in the Bible. So I shall proctor this exam to see how we do.

1. Charity suffereth long—If you are impatient with others, your love has cooled.
2. and is kind—If you are no longer seeking to be useful to or to bless others, your love has cooled.
3. charity envieth not—If you begrudge the honor or esteem shown to others, your love has cooled.
4. charity vaunteth not itself—If you are seeking attention for yourself over or to the exclusion of others, your love has cooled.
5. is not puffed up—If you are haughty or feeling yourself superior to others, your love has cooled.
6. Doth not behave itself unseemly—If you are impolite, uncourteous, or disrespectful to others, your love has cooled.
7. seeketh not her own—If you want yours first ahead of others, your love has cooled.
8. is not easily provoked—If you are easily angered with others, your love has cooled.
9. thinketh no evil—If you keep a tally of offenses against you by others, your love has cooled.
10. Rejoiceth not in iniquity—If you are delighting in anything unrighteous or being attracted to it, your love has cooled.
11. but rejoiceth in truth—If you have little joy in the truth, your love has cooled.
12. Beareth all things—If you are not covering the faults of others but rather bringing them to light whenever possible, your love has cooled.
13. believeth all things—If you have no confidence in others, your love has cooled.
14. hopeth all things—If you take a dim outlook for the

prospective growth and good of others, your love has cooled.

15. endureth all things—If you do not remain with anyone you find difficult, your love has cooled.

### What if I fail?

I assure you no one gets one hundred on this test. What if you are pricked in your conscience by some of these indicators? The best word I can give you is, “Repent” (Revelation 2:4-5). When love has cooled, repent and do the hard work of loving others. It’s easy to become cynical and bitter where we blame everyone else for our own failure to love them. It’s easy to rationalize that in our minds but we are wrong when we do.

*"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." – John 13:34-25*



## *“Of Children and Choice”*

by Bro. Jason Shults

*“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works” (Prov. 24:10-12)*

Approaching any subject in which you want to gain attention, a good way to start is to tell a cute story or an interesting anecdote. But since it is my purpose to address the topic of abortion, I do not know any cute stories to start that with. It is a topic – plain and simple – that demands our most serious attention.

Now some modest explanation of our text is important, I think, before seeing how it can and will be applied to this issue this evening. The main thought is in verse 11 where the writer says “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain...”

Pictured in this verse is any group of individuals who through no fault of their own are found to be in a moment of mortal danger. They are drawn to their death. They are being dragged toward that final moment. They are ready to be slain. That word is literally

“slaughtered.” And the assumption is that we – who are strong – are in a position to lend some aid but we do not.

This does not specify a group of unborn children and I will not pretend that it does. It is intentionally vague. It could have said “prisoners for their faith” or “innocent bystanders” or “widows weak and uncared for.” It is specifically vague. By saying none, it applies to them all. There is no group named because the writer wants to encourage support for any innocent group of weak individuals being carried unjustly to their demise.

Verse 10 deals with a possible cause for our failure. Perhaps we faint. That word there in Hebrew means to sink down, to relax or to be disheartened. Perhaps we think our strength is small.

But verse 12 is where I want to bring your attention. It deals with the consequences of failure and it is startling. The folks there defend themselves by saying “We did not know!” But we do know, do we not? We can not claim that the past 39 years have gone by in our ignorance. We do know!

However, the writer does not say that they defend themselves by claiming “We do not know” and God says “Yes you did!” The writer makes it clear that even ignorance is not an excuse for inaction.

*“If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works.”*

Why did you not know? God will look in your heart and find out. If you knew, you have no excuse for allowing it.

If you do not know, you have no excuse for not knowing. We cannot dodge God’s judgment when we fail – be it by fear or ignorance or apathy – to intervene in the unjust deaths of individuals who find themselves innocently placed in mortal danger.

That is essentially our introduction into why this issue of abortion is so important. God’s people are absolutely held accountable for their inaction and/or indifference when innocent people are taken to their deaths.

Oh, but that word “people” is the sticking point, is it not? This is important to understand the entirety of the abortion issue comes down to one single question, “Is it a person?” That is important, I think, even in our text. After all, God does not demand action to protect an unviable fetus, but He demands defense of innocent people! So which is it? If that entity within a mother’s womb is merely a fetus – some scientifically defined mass of blood and tissue – then we have done nothing wrong. But if that is a person,

if it is a child, if it is a baby – then we have clearly crossed the line.

It is important for us to determine if this call to action in Proverbs is applicable to the question of abortion today. And the best way to do that is to ask the question, “Is it a person?”

We will try to answer that question in a couple of different ways. We will first consider, from just a logical standpoint, the potential personhood of an unborn child. Secondly, we will examine if the Word of God lends any definition for the unborn.

#### THE LOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR PERSONHOOD

It is fair to say that the question of Pro-Life and Pro-Choice can get muddled into a thousand different directions when the two sides start debating. However, it is always going to prove fruitless debate if we do not keep it focused on the single important question, “Is it a person?” Both sides are guilty of ignoring this question. We immediately begin to jump to the “is it right or is it wrong” arguments without answering this question first. We are trying to answer a question of morality without ever establishing the facts. We need to get rid of all the side arguments by bringing it back to that issue alone.

#### TODDLER TACTICS

Scott Klusendorf, president of Life Training Institute makes a good argument for this. He writes that the issue can be brought to that single point by using what he calls “Toddler Tactics.”

Essentially if we will apply any of the reasoning for the allowance of abortion to a toddler instead of a fetus we will see the question really becomes one of definition. Is it a child?

For example, a common argument is that a woman has a right to privacy in making these decisions. Is it okay to kill a toddler in private? No! A toddler is a person even in private.

What about a question of affordability? Some families will opt for abortion because they simply can not fit the ever expanding cost of children into their available budget. Well, would it be okay for a family in hard economic times to eliminate three mouths to feed by putting their toddlers to death? No, a child is a person even if their parents are poor.

What if the child is not wanted? Well, first as an adoptive parent I can assure you, it is wanted somewhere. But even if not, would we apply the same standard to an infant? After all, it does not become more or less wanted just because it has been born. Let us say that there is a 3-year-old who is not wanted. And by the time he is 5 he will have been physically and mentally abused. At what point does that make it okay to kill him? A child does not stop being a person because they are unwanted or might be treated badly.

What if the baby will have disabilities? After all, medical science can now somewhat accurately predict some mental and physical disabilities. But imagine there is a 2-year-old, mentally disabled, can not walk, can not talk, will not ever be able to do either. Let us say it even looks ugly. Should we spare that child and ourselves the pain of its continued existence?

Even the most extreme arguments become focused with Toddler Tactics. For example, I am sure you have heard the question “what if the poor girl had been raped? Should not she be allowed to have an abortion?” To answer that, we must consider how should a civil society treat innocent human beings that remind us of a painful event?

If a woman came to you and said “here is my child. He is the product of rape. He looks like his father and he reminds me of that horrible experience every waking moment. I’m afraid he is going to grow to be just like him.” You would have a great deal of compassion for that mother and her dreadful situation. But, you would never say “grab the pillow and put it over his face.” A person – even if that person reminds you of horrible experiences – is still a person and there are better options available.

By the way, just to give you that statistics, less than 1 percent of abortions are performed due to rape or incest. Six percent are because of potential medical problems with the child. Saving the life of the mother does not even make the chart. Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said that in his entire career he not once encountered such a situation. The vast majority – about 93 percent – fall into the category of social reasons such as: a child would be too expensive, unwanted, inconvenient, etc.

So then, that is the real question, is it not? It does not matter if it is wanted or not, if the mother can afford it or not, if it has disabilities or not, or even if it is the product of rape. If it is just tissue, then get rid of it. But if it is a child – it has a right to life. All else is irrelevant. So let us start trying to answer that question.

#### GENETICS AND APPEARANCE

Unborn children, from the earliest stages of development, have all the genetic material necessary for humanity. The smallest particles of life which we now understand is the DNA code included in our cellular system. Within that code we have all the parts of a working human from the color of their hair to the propensity for talent in certain areas to the likelihood of specific diseases. In fact, if you gave a DNA scientist the smallest cells of life they would be able to identify it as to the genus and species.

“This is human,” they would say – not knowing if it came from you, me or an unborn baby two days after conception. It is that code which starts the human fetus on the remarkable development journey through its first nine months. Within the first moments of

fertilization, the gender of the child is a forgone conclusion. In the first few weeks, the neural tubes are formed, setting the foundation for thought, senses and feeling. The heartbeat begins in the fifth week and arms and legs begin to appear. By the seventh week, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, fingers, toes are forming and clearly recognizable. By week eleven, almost all the organs are not only formed, but also operating. By week fourteen in development, babies can be seen sucking their thumbs. By the time the child is only half-way to the normal pregnancy, the baby has developed the cells needed for taste, smell, hearing, sight and touch. He or she will kick, punch, wiggle, calm when they hear familiar sounds like music and voices and be startled when they hear loud and unexpected noises.

Legally, you still have another month or sometimes more after that to have an abortion. If it was an eagle egg, it is illegal to destroy even if it has just been laid and is nothing but a yolk and some goo. Eagles are a protected species. Nobody argues that the egg is not an eagle yet. It is given that status just because, if let to natural processes, it will become an eagle. Yet, an unborn child with all the genetic code for humanity, with heart, lungs, fingers, toes, eyes, ears and nose - who can think, feel, kick, suck its thumb, be comforted, be frightened – is not a person until the moment it is born. The difference, as far as I can tell, is somebody will stand up and say they want the eagle to live, but the child is not wanted.

Some would argue, “Oh, that is not it! It just is not a person until it is born!” Why? It looks like a person. It reacts like a person. It feels like a person. What standard do we use to determine it isn’t? Stephen Schwarz in his book “The Moral Question of Abortion” discounts the four main arguments against the humanity of an unborn child.

#### 1. Size or Appearance.

Many say that an unborn child is simply too small to assign humanity to it. After all, in some of those stages of development I listed, the baby is still only about an inch or two long. However, that argument does not stand to reason. Men are generally bigger than women, does that make them more human? I’m bigger than most of you reading this, but that does not mean I am more of a person than you. Size and appearance are not determining factors of humanity.

#### 2. Level of Development.

Some would argue that the stage of development is so early and new that we can not call it human yet. It just is not a person because it has not fully developed. But, do we somehow forfeit rights because we are not as developed? A 14-year-old is more developed than a 2-year-old but that does not mean the teenager is more of a real person. Humans do not become disposable

because they are underdeveloped, helpless, defenseless or dependent.

#### 3. Environment.

Well, maybe it is about a change of locations? I’ve never understood this one. The birth process from womb to outside world is a change of about 8-9 inches. What happens in that birth canal that makes the child that comes out different from what it was on the inside? A doctor would be convicted of murder if he took that baby after it made that trip and killed it. But somehow it is okay if he reaches inside with a vacuum and sucks it out? A change of locations is a morally trivial argument to whether it is a person or not.

#### 4. Degree of Dependency.

The difference, most would argue, is that an unborn child is dependent to such a degree to its mother that the mother’s choice of self-determination supersedes the child’s right to life. But no baby is viable or independent if that is the test we set. When does a baby stop being totally dependent? 1-day, 1-week, 1-month, 1-year? If that is the standard, it also supports infanticide – the murder of infants. What about someone totally dependent on insulin, nitroglycerin or oxygen regulators? We might be dependent on others for our survival, but that does not mean we are dependent on others for our value. Perhaps they are dependent persons ... but they are still persons.

Logically, we have every reason to include an unborn child in our definition of valuable humanity and any argument to exclude them from personhood fails based on logic. Is it a person? Yes, an unborn baby is a person.

#### GOD’S WORD DEFINES VALUABLE LIFE.

However, we are not exclusively limited to the scope of human logic and philosophy when it comes to determining our important question, “Is it a person?” God’s Word makes several statements about the personhood of unborn children.

#### GOD SEES OUR START AS BEING IN THE WOMB.

*“Did not he that made me in the womb make him and did not one fashion us in the womb” (Job 31:15)*

*“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Ps. 139:13-16)*



Where was Job made? In the womb. He was not baking. He was not being prepared to be made. Job says God “fashioned us in the womb.” David says in Psalm 139 he was made in secret where none could see but God. He is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” He describes in verse 16 a God that sees us for who we are even before we are fully developed. He sees our substance and our members, even when they are incomplete and “as yet there was none of them.” Job and David do not picture a passive God. They picture a God who takes an active role in the development and growth of the child in the womb. That unborn child is the creation of God and the development of the unborn child is in the hands of God and only He has the authority to either advance or hinder it.

#### THE BABY IN THE WOMB IS PERSONALLY KNOWN

*“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations”* (Jer. 1:5).

Do you understand what the Lord is saying there? Not only does it repeat the previous point, that the Lord is the One who controls the formation and development of a child. It also designated that God looks at an unborn baby and sees its purpose and potential and plan for its entire life. Jeremiah, before he was even born God had made the plan for his life. So what is God’s answer to our question, “Is it a person?” In the Bible, God speaks about those unborn children in a very personal way.

They have personalities. They have wants and desires and gladness and even jealousies. Genesis 25:22 says of Rebekah’s pregnancy with Jacob and Esau that “the children struggled together within her.” Brothers fight. That is what children do, is it not? Incidentally, in that verse, Moses uses the normal Hebrew term for a child.

*“And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me”* (Luke 1:41-43)

This is a wonderful occurrence. Two women, cousins, both pregnant, come together to speak. But they are not the only ones there, are they? Elisabeth is older and she is pregnant with John the Baptist and Mary her young cousin is pregnant with Jesus. While those mothers are happy to see one another and it sure seems like those unborn children are happy as well, does it not? John “leaped in the womb” excited at the very sound of Mary’s voice.

Incidentally, the word for “babe” there is *βρεφος* (*brephos*) – the exact same word that is used when Jesus is born and the “babe

(*βρεφος*) is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger” and also in, “*And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God*” (Luke 18:15-16)

The born and the unborn are given the same regard in the Bible and it is not some impersonal view, but the acknowledgment of a personal, desired for, and loving God.

Is it a person? Praise God, it is a person! It is a wanted person. It is a valued person. It is a person for whom Jesus Himself turns to His disciples and says “do not stop them from coming to Me!”

Logic – that is facts we can gather and everything we can think or know – demands that unborn child is a person. God’s Word clearly shows that and unborn child is seen as a person. Then on what basis do we exclude them from our text and turn a blind eye to the defenseless being murdered? We have no excuse for our inaction.

#### WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS DO?

First off, you can vote Pro-Life. Those of you who know me have probably noticed that I am not really all that politically-minded. My politics are simple – vote for people who are both Pro-Life and proactive about it. By that I mean, candidates that are Pro-Life in their convictions and also have the courage to act on those convictions. Very little else matters much compared to this issue. Are you overtaxed, undertaxed, big government, little government, happy with the economy, angry with the economy, etc. The real question is where does a politician stand on the moral issues, specifically the killing of children?

We have been blessed by God with the freedom to vote and we ought to embrace that gift and do it in a way that honors Him. That is certainly something we can do to stop abortions.

Secondly, if you know someone who is considering an abortion, lovingly plead with them, beg them, to reconsider. There are other options available. Do not be foolish and pretend that those options are easy. Keeping a child is a difficult decision and it will not be a simple road. Giving a child up for adoption is heartbreaking and agonizing. Do not pretend that it is not.

But you can certainly point out how the easy decision comes with other problems and the right choice is such a blessing. For example, of my three daughters, at least two are alive only because an attempted abortion failed. God worked so miraculously. I would hope that no rational person would look at them now and decide that the world can do without them ... but that is what abortion does.

Having that conversation with someone can be hard, especially when they have not asked for your advice. The easy thing to do is say, “that is not my business.” Do not for a moment think that! It is as much your duty as stopping someone from committing murder in front of you is your duty. And if they ignore your pleading, your job is not done. That person will be dealing with a great amount of guilt and you need to tell them that forgiveness is found in Jesus Christ alone.

Finally, folks, the absolute greatest tool we have is prayer. If we have learned anything about God and ourselves, I would think that it is that we are unable to do anything, but He is able to do everything. He can and will intervene in situations where we cannot. Pray for our nation, because God can turn the hearts of our leaders. Pray for those leaders that God will convict them of this truth and give them the courage to follow those convictions. Pray for the children because God can protect them through seeming impossible means. Pray for the women debating abortion because God can instill in them a love – a natural affection – for that child. But what we have to do is stop ignoring it.

None of us ignored the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Approximately 3,500 lives were snuffed out at the World Trade Center on that day ... and abortion took about that same number that day. But it happened again on Sept. 12, and again on Sept. 13, and Sept 14, and every day since – long after the World Trade Center fires were put out.

Perhaps the best way to put it into perspective is a comparison of abortions to live births. While that statistic has been as high as 364 abortions for every 1000 live births the most recent accurate number on that is in 2001 when 246 abortions were performed for every 1000 live births. That is 1 abortion for every 4 live births.

Let us put that into perspective this way. If you remember the school shooting in Columbine, Colo. in 1999 – 12 students and one teacher were shot to death and the entire nation mourned the loss of life. It was a tragic, unnecessary, heartbreaking day. Now, imagine that tomorrow a gunman walks into every schoolhouse in the nation and goes about the room shooting every 5th child.

Do not say such a thing could never happen! It happens every day. We simply cannot ignore those who are drawn to their deaths and pretend that we do not know.



## In Health

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. ~ III John 1:2

with Bro. John Fry D.C.



### *Scoliosis*

Probably the most frequent reason for children to come to my office is scoliosis. The word strikes fear in many parent’s minds, causing them to imagine large back braces or even surgery. Although these events do occur for extreme cases, the likelihood is not frequent for those that have mild to moderate curves.

So what exactly is scoliosis? Simply put scoliosis is an abnormal curvature of the spine. The back does have normal front-to-back curves. These curves work like arches in a bridge to distribute the weight on the spinal column in an even manner. People with hunched shoulders or a flattened back have issues with the normal curves, but that is not scoliosis. When we look at the spine from behind, we should see a straight spine. Anytime the spine curves, either left or right, this is called a scoliosis.

About three in every 100 people have some degree of scoliosis. In many it will never get worse or cause any significant problems. But for some, the problem could worsen over time causing pain, breathing difficulties, or even problems with the heart.

Most of the time scoliosis is idiopathic in nature. That is to say the cause is unknown. Types of scoliosis vary, too. Some scoliosis will start in the lower back going in one direction and then go in the opposite direction in the mid-back. This is the most common and is called an S-curve because of its shape. Sometimes the curve goes only to one side and can become quite large. This is called a C-curve and often needs bracing. Both forms can be complicated by rotation of the spine as well.

Who tends to get scoliosis? From what we know, the condition seems to run in families. It also seems more frequent in girls than boys. Girls are five times more likely to require treatment for the condition. If no treatment is given when the child is still growing, then it is more likely for the condition to be problematic or worsen.

Although it is impossible to clearly see the degree of scoliosis without a standing x-ray, there are some things you can look for in your own children. While standing behind him, look to see if one shoulder is higher than the other. Put your hands on top of his waist. Is it level or is one side higher? If either of these two

simple observations yielded a “yes” answer, then your child needs to be further evaluated by your child’s pediatrician or chiropractor.

If you have any questions or comments that you would like me to address in a future article, please do not hesitate to contact me on Facebook or call me at 304-522-7246. Until next time, I pray that you might be in health.

## Historical Marker

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. Psalm 119:99-101



## John Calvin and James Arminius

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

In all probability this article will be criticized for a number of reasons. Be that as it may, it is a fact that there is a great division among those called Baptists. Sound Baptists of the historic sort are slandered as “Calvinists” as if they were disciples of that Protestant Reformer. In addition we shall present some historical information to show that John Calvin did not originate what is today called “Calvinism.” And neither did James Arminius originate what is today called “Arminianism.” (Note this: an Arminian – with an “i” - is one who believes in freewill doctrine: an Armenian – with an “e” - is one whose ethnicity sprang from Armenia. It is easy to remember: the word spelled with an “i” has to do with “doctr-I-ne” while the word with “e” has to do with -E-tnicity. Because of those two letter differences, these words are properly pronounced slightly different one from the other.)

We ask the question: where did “Calvinism” originate? Since the Bible consistently presents God as almighty and shows Him to always act without the interference of either angels or men, we conclude that God is sovereign in everything that He does. This is the foundation for what we prefer to call the doctrine of grace rather than “Calvinism.” Nothing outside of Himself compels God to do anything. He is not obligated or bound by anything outside of Himself. The Bible contains the words elect, election, predestinate, foreknow, determinate counsel, etc. The healthy method of Bible interpretation requires us to let these words say what they say: let them mean what they mean without twisting or manipulating them into meaning less than they do. We conclude

from our study of the Bible that God chose whom He would save before the foundation of the world and that He is accomplishing His perfect will.

We came to these conclusions apart from ever reading the writings of Calvin or any other man. The Bible says, for example: “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 love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:4-6). And again, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9). It ought to be a matter of historical interest to sound Baptists today that one group of our anabaptist forefathers was given the name “Paulician.” Our enemies today try to say that the Paulicians were so named after an early Armenian (note the “e”) bishop. However, Gibbon in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, liv), says it means "Disciples of St. Paul." We think it is obvious that not only Paul but all the apostles believed in the sovereignty of God in election, predestination, etc.

Another proof that John Calvin did not originate that which is called “Calvinism” today is this: Augustine of Hippo (sometimes called Saint Augustine) wrote and preached these things before John Calvin was even born. Perhaps you have read Spurgeon's comment concerning Augustine preaching sovereign grace doctrine. Note that Augustine was born November 13, 354 and died August 28, 430 – long before John Calvin: Calvin born July 10, 1509 and died May 27, 1564. His birth was, therefore, 1,155 years after the birth of Augustine. So it is ignorance to claim that John Calvin originated the doctrine of grace. It should also be noted that while Calvin did teach sovereign grace doctrine, he also taught baptismal regeneration and also that the sword should exercise its power over those who disagreed with his doctrine. He was, of course, a Protestant Reformer. What that really means is that he was once a part of the Roman Harlot and had a great part in giving birth to her daughters, for Rome is “The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” (Revelation 17:5). This preacher is not aware of anything good that came out of the Protestant Reformation. It is, first of all, a fact that a reformation is not possible. Proof: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). The second fact is this: no “reformation” was needed. There were anabaptist congregations in existence in most of the countries of Europe. Had the “Reformers” really desired to leave the Harlot, they could have made a clean break with her and sought membership with one of

the Lord's congregations. But they kept Harlot baptism, Harlot church government, Harlot church state compromises, and actively persecuted anabaptists and other dissenting groups.

Now let us consider James Arminius and Arminianism (note the "i"). It may be a surprise to some to hear that John Calvin never heard of James Arminius nor of Arminianism. These two never had an argument nor did they ever meet. Calvin lived a short time in France, but spent most of his life in Switzerland dying there on May 27, 1564. James Arminius was a Dutchman who lived in Holland. He was born there on October 10, 1560. A little math shows that Arminius was only four years old when Calvin died. Thus there was no interchange, correspondence or communication between the two.

What is Arminianism and how did this system of doctrine come about? First of all, it should be understood that just as there were men who preached sovereign grace before Calvin, so there were people who preached freewill doctrine before Arminius. In fact, a Dominican friar named Thomas Aquinas, a Catholic theologian, was the father of Roman Catholic freewill teaching. He lived from A. D. 1225 until March 7, 1274. So Aquinas lived and died before either Calvin or Arminius. He opposed the sovereignty of God teachings of Augustine and his doctrine became the basic doctrine of the Catholics. It is called "Thomism." Again, it is obvious that Thomas Aquinas, Calvin and Arminius were not contemporaries, and never had any personal meetings or confrontations.

James Arminius began his professorship at the Dutch University of Leiden in 1603. Remember, Calvin had died in 1564. In the years following Calvin's death, a Dutch pastor, theologian and former student of his (Calvin's) named Guido de Bres crafted what is called the Belgic Confession. (The term Belgic then referred to not only Belgium, but all the low countries including Holland.) This Belgic Confession was the official doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church and other "reformed churches." The Dutch Reformed Church was the officially sanctioned state church of Holland. James Arminius died in October A. D. 1609.

After James Arminius died, his followers presented their objections regarding the Belgic Confession (Calvinism) to the Dutch government the following year. They opposed the established Calvinism and wanted to change the state church's doctrinal position. They wanted the teachings of James Arminius to be the official doctrine of their church. They opposed the sovereignty of God in salvation including total depravity, unconditional election, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. It was these followers of

Arminius who first came up with their "five points." Their objections were presented to the Dutch government in an official document called "The Remonstrance of 1610." These men were known as "Remonstrants." In response to this Remonstrance of 1610, the Dutch government ordered a synod – an official gathering of church leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church and eight other reformed bodies. (No Baptists or anabaptists were present.) It was not until November 13, 1618 – about 8 years later - that the first meeting of the Synod of Dort was held. (Dort is another name for Dordrecht, the city where the synod was held.) These Reformed church leaders held 154 meetings, the last on May 9, 1619. In these meetings the Synod of Dort crafted "the five points of Calvinism" in response to Arminius's teachings. John Calvin did not formulate the famous "five points" that today bear his name. Additionally you cannot find anything like the familiar "TULIP" in any of Calvin's writings. The "five points of Calvinism" were a response to the "five points" of the Dutch Remonstrants who were disciples of James Arminius.

Considering these facts, and the fact that sound Baptists today reject Calvin's doctrine of baptismal regeneration and other aberrations, why are they slandered by the name "Calvinist?" A multitude of freewill Baptists in various manmade organizations have never heard of James Arminius. But they have heard their preachers make ignorant and untrue statements about "Calvinism." They have heard sovereign grace Baptists slandered and maligned. They have been taught that "Calvinism" is a horrible system of doctrine. They have not been told that what today is called "Calvinism" is the doctrine of the old Baptists because it is the doctrine of the Bible.

We think we can conclude this little article with no better words than those of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said: "I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus." We can only add: Amen! (Spurgeon's quote from: A Defense of Calvinism.)



# "A Special Kind"

by Bro. Jeff Short

(Continued from front page)

Paul means nourishing and cherishing your wife ([Ephesians 5:29](#)). It might seem here that Paul steps out of the Christ/church love into something else, but he maintains at the end of verse 29 that is how Jesus loves the church. Paul acknowledges the mystery in verses 32, but concludes the whole paragraph this way: "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself" ([Ephesians 5:33](#)). I'm not suggesting there are no difficulties, nor anything to be learned, but loving your wife the way the Bible commands is within reach for every man ([Ephesians 5:29](#)).

## Tone-deaf, Boneheaded, if you will

Men have many species of problems that are common to men, but I will select one specimen for examination. Men tend to be tone-deaf in regard to their wife's concerns. This works out in a few different ways.

- *Dismissing.* If a wife expresses a concern, worry, or even a complaint, we men are quick to dismiss it as nagging. Nagging really is a thing and women can be guilty of it ([Proverbs 19:13](#); [27:15](#)). That doesn't mean, though, that anything a wife says, which her husband doesn't want to hear, is nagging. A wife's concerns are her concerns, whether her husband thinks she should be concerned about it or not. Since your wife is your concern, husbands should be concerned about her concerns.
- *Ignoring.* When a man grows up in a busy city, he becomes accustomed to the continual din of such a city. He reaches a place where he no longer notices the noise until he goes to visit relatives out in the country where the crickets and frogs keep him awake all night. Men can also become accustomed to their wives to the point where they don't take much notice of what she says. Maybe they say, "Yes, dear" as easily as they breathe but they do not register what she has to say.
- *Misunderstanding.* Men tend to think in certain ways and approach problems in certain ways that are exasperating for many wives. So the wife comes and tells the husband about problems C, A, and B and the husband wastes time telling her she's got the order all wrong. I mean, everyone knows it goes A, B, C, D, etc. We all learned the song in kindergarten for mercy sake. This classic male blunder is missing the point and not understanding the real cause. This reminds me of a husband and wife I saw in a store a couple of years ago. The wife was obviously upset with her husband, "You never think of me. You only think of yourself." He was just as obviously surprised by her assertion, "That's not true. I was just thinking of you when I walked in Walmart, because I knew I had to find you." That is a

special kind of boneheadedness that, I daresay, only a man could attain.

## Duct tape for the soul

How should a husband deal with the concerning things that are a problem for his wife? Paul said to love your wife as you love yourself, or maybe we should say as you ought to love yourself. How do men love themselves when it comes to concerns that are a problem for them? They might at times be slow to get to it, but they generally address it. If a man is trying to build or fix something and he is continually frustrated by the fact he doesn't have the right tool, what does he do? If he's going to the deerstand or bass lake before dawn in the snow, what does he do? He makes sure that he has what he needs. If he's going to need food, he gets it. If he's going to need to keep warm, he makes sure he has the necessary clothing. If his boots are falling apart, he might fix them with duct tape but he's probably going to get another pair.

I was going around my yard for the first mow of the season this spring. When I got to a certain part, I hit my face on a branch. I stopped the mower and thought about how that branch was always in the way when I cut the grass. I immediately fetched a tool and cut all the branches that forced me to stoop unnaturally when cutting the grass. This is one of the ways a man loves himself. He takes care of his problems. He anticipates needs and provides for them. Paul says to do this for your wife. You know how to take care of your problems and so you also know how to love your wife. Anticipate her needs, provide for them, and take care of her problems promptly.

I conclude with this: Don't be a bonehead. When your wife is concerned about something, try to understand the cause. When a man is driving down the road and hears a noise from the innards of his car, he notices it. If he never hears it again, he soon forgets it. But if the noise persists and grows worse over time, he knows he needs to get it fixed. So he takes it to the shop and tells the mechanic about the noise it makes. If the mechanic treated him the way he treats his wife, the mechanic would say, "So it's making a loud noise? Easy, just turn up your radio and you won't hear it."

## Baptists For Liberty

"And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts." Psalm 119:45

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