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*“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)*

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## WHAT IS LOVE?

It seems that most people understand love to be this warm, emotional feeling you have for someone to whom you are attracted. But that isn't the love that Jesus commanded you to have for God, for your spouse, for your fellow Christian, for your neighbor and even for your enemy. The characteristics of this love are described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a:

*Charity [agape love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, be-*

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THE HARVESTER

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*lieveth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.  
Charity never faileth...*

My encouragement to you is to pick someone in your life that you know you need to love, but you have trouble loving, and then consider the “love characteristics” you should have for that individual. It can be a man or a woman or a boy or a girl; I am going to refer to that person as “he”.

*“Charity suffereth long, and is kind.”* You are to be patient in spite of the things you may have suffered from him. He may be inconsiderate or antagonistic. He may be selfish. He may talk too much or ignore you and your needs. He may cause you many trials because of his actions. Those who sin against you are likely the most difficult to love. But you are asked to suffer all these things and still love, not merely for a time, but long, without end. I have found that the best way to love someone who causes you to suffer is to see them as a precious soul that needs God’s love and your love so that eventually they can be saved. You are to be kind to him. Your natural reaction may be to fight fire with fire and give him a taste of what he has done to you. But instead, you are to be kind, that is, gentle, mild, and compassionate – easy to be approached.

*“Charity envieth not.”* Envy is when you resent him and you wish that you had what he has. It may be that he has material possessions, abilities, relationships, position or accomplishments. Love is that you are happy for him and how he has been blessed and you don’t resent him.

*“Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.”* This has to do with pride and boasting on your part. Maybe you have done something well; maybe you have been greatly blessed. But you don’t throw it in his face and show him that you think you are better than he is. The opposite of pride is humility. Therefore, in love you will be humble.

Love *“doth not behave itself unseemly.”* You don’t act in an inappropriate manner towards him. You aren’t rude, sarcastic, overly critical or exhibit any action unbecoming of a Chris-

tian. Whereas he may act in an inappropriate manner to you, you do not respond in kind.

Love “*seeketh not her own.*” In my opinion, this is one of the most significant characteristics of love. In love you are not selfish but instead you seek the good of the one that you love. You want his success; you want him to be blessed; you want his salvation.

Love “*is not easily provoked.*” Even when he acts inappropriately, because of your love, you are not provoked to be irritated or angry or to respond in any inappropriate manner.

Love “*thinketh no evil.*” You don’t suppose that his good actions have a bad motive. In love, you don’t misjudge him but think that his actions and motives are good until proven otherwise.

Love “*rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.*” Because of your love, you do not rejoice when he sins or commits wickedness. Neither do you rejoice when he receives punishment for his wrongs. Instead, you rejoice when he follows the truth of the gospel and you rejoice when he is bearing good fruit. You rejoice when you hear good things about him.

Love “*beareth all things.*” When the one you love has imperfections or even sin, you do not give up on him; you do not spread to others what you know about his faults. It is not a matter of condoning wrong, but instead you are seeking his good.

Love “*believeth all things.*” You are not distrustful or suspicious. You believe the good about him because you love him.

Love “*hopeth all things.*” You don’t give up on the one you love; you hope for the best. If there is sin in his life, you maintain hope for a change of heart and repentance. If he commits some doubtful action, you hope that a good explanation can be provided.

Love “*endureth all things.*” You patiently endure persecution or suffering you receive from him. Whatever may happen, you continue to love.

*“Charity never faileth.”* Love continues to survive. You don’t switch off love and go to other inferior reactions in your heart and actions. Your love for him is permanent until death.

God has love for you with these very characteristics. I encourage you to have this kind of love for those around you. This kind of love is very powerful in making you the person God wants you to be and in influencing for good those that you love. *“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”* (1 Cor. 13:13). It should be easy to see why love is the greatest.

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who did Jesus appear to first after his resurrection?
2. Who was Jacob’s grandfather?
3. What happened to the man who built his house upon the sand?
4. Who suggested that Jonah be thrown overboard?
5. Which disciple wanted to see the imprint of the nails before he would believe?

### ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

...and remember last month’s questions?

1. From which part of Adam’s body did God create Eve?  
RIB (Gen. 2:22)
2. What sin is Cain remembered for? MURDER (Gen. 4:8)
3. Why did Jacob initially send Joseph’s brothers into Egypt? TO BUY CORN (Gen. 42:2-3)
4. When the Prodigal Son returned, his father gave him a robe, shoes and what other item? RING (Luke 15:22)
5. What does James say we should do if we lack wisdom?  
ASK GOD FOR WISDOM, IN FAITH (Jas. 1:5)

## HOW TRUTH CAUSES DIVISION

Of all the prayers that Jesus prayed, few meant more than His desire for unity among His people.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one... (John 17:20-23)*

Paul later added, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10).

Strangely enough, there was an instance where Jesus Himself caused a division. He had just finished making a statement on the Holy Spirit which was confusing to the people. *“But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”* (John 7:39). Afterward, some were convinced that Jesus was “the Christ”, while others could not accept this. **“So there was a division among the people because of him”** (John 7:43).

It usually shocks people to read John 7:43. How could Jesus be the cause of religious division? It appears here that Jesus has made a serious error. However, notice that it was His teaching that caused the division. What He taught (the substance of His teaching) is what made the people take sides and divide themselves. Some accepted His teachings and others did not. Thus, they formed different opinions as to the true identity of Jesus.

What Jesus taught was God’s Word, and we know the Word of God is Truth. Before His prayer for unity, He petitioned:

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*  
(John 17:17-19)

In the instance of John 7:43, it was Truth that caused the division among the people.

Truth is that which agrees with final reality. Thus, Truth will always agree with God because Truth is God's Word. Anything else will be short of the truth. Let's face it. Truth will also cause spiritual divisions. Truth will create a dividing line between right and wrong, between righteousness and sin. Recall again the prayer of Jesus in John 17:17, "*Sanctify them through thy truth.*" It was to be through God's Word (Truth) that the people were to be sanctified (set apart). In effect, Truth will separate, as is sometimes stated, the "contenders" from the "pretenders".

In Matthew 7:13-14 we read of two paths. "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*" (Mat. 7:13-14).

The broad way leads to destruction, the narrow way to eternal life. It is Truth that causes this division, or two directions. Truth determines which path a person will take. Those who follow after Truth will find the narrow way. Those who do NOT follow after Truth will find themselves on the broad way. "*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (2 The. 2:12).

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Perhaps this explains the many denominations in our country today. Every departure from Truth has brought about some new religious group. In the early days of the church, when ONLY the Truth was preached, there were no denominations! But soon men began to change God's Truth into their own lies (Rom. 1:25). What has resulted is all the religious divisions we have in the world today. Friends, it is easy to see that we will have unity only when men everywhere decide to choose God's Truth over the lies and doctrines and creeds of man.

Jesus once tried to explain to the Jews the nature of division caused by Truth. Those who believe in Truth will be on the side of Jesus Christ. But those who refuse to abide in Truth will be considered on the side of Satan.

*Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*  
(John 8:43-47)

*"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Pet. 4:11a). That should every Christian's desire. We must always put forth Truth in spite of what "other religious groups" say. Yes, it may cause divisions but Truth should never be compromised because then it would no longer be Truth. By just making one little change in God's Holy Word means a total deviation from Truth (Rev. 22:18-19). In order to please our Lord, we must have our "loins girt about with truth" (Eph. 6:14) and continue to walk in God's Truth. *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth"* (3 John 1:4).

Often people will not be pleased to hear Truth, especially when it condemns them. Some may even think you to be cra-

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
September 14 - 16	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	Mike Kirby (Wedowee, AL) & Tim Eldridge (Woodland, AL)
September 21 - 23	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
September 21	Oak Grove Woodland, AL	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 22	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 23	Napoleon Woodland, AL	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 28 - 30	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 28 - 30	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Timothy Lewis (Eubank, KY) & Mark Carpenter (Liberty, KY)
September 28 - 30	Verona Verona, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

*(cont. from pg. 7)*

zy, as Festus thought Paul in Acts 26:25. “*But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness*” (Acts 26:25). It is very likely that your friends will reject you when you tell them the Gospel Truth and your family may disown you. But stand tall and firm for the TRUTH (2 Pet. 1:12). Someday it will save you!

RAY MCMANUS  
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