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A good friend shared an interesting thought with me a couple of weeks ago.

Imagine you're in Heaven. You've experienced [Revelation 21](#):

"... God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people ... He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." ([Revelation 21:3-4](#), NLT)

You have seen the beauty and experienced the peace and joy.

One day God calls a meeting and asks for volunteers. There are many people on earth, He says, that have no idea about the gift of eternal life.

He needs volunteers to go back to earth and share the good news about God's love. He needs people who have experienced salvation to share with the others the joy and security they have.

He makes it clear that your place in Heaven is secure, you will come home after your mission is completed.

Would you volunteer?

I would like to think that I would.

Now I know this isn't good theology. People don't get to come back here after they die because they're simply sleeping, waiting for God to wake them up at the Second Coming.

But think about it for a moment.

When you give yourself to Jesus, your salvation is secure – not because of what you are or have done, but because of what Jesus did on the cross. If you stay with Jesus, you will ultimately find yourself in Heaven with Him.

Not only that, but He promises to be with you right now to lead you on the best path for your life.

You can begin to experience – right now – the peace and joy that comes with companionship with Jesus and His Father.

When you follow His instructions, there is no eternal risk to you – your future is guaranteed!

And, Jesus is asking for volunteers. There are lots of people around you who have not experienced Jesus.

When you came to Jesus and asked Him to take control of your life, He makes the mission clear. Participating in it is what identifies you as His follower.

The Mission

Jesus painted a picture of what His followers would look like. When asked about the most important commandment, He didn't pick one of the 10. He said:

"The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31, NLT)

He made it clear that the commandments are about relationships, not just following a set of rules. The rules are there to help us better understand what our relationships should or shouldn't look like.

Later in His ministry, when He described the judgement He made it clear that those who practiced a lifestyle of loving others by caring for their needs (food, shelter, comfort, etc.) would be the ones who make it to Heaven. And, those who were too busy taking care of themselves while ignoring the needs of others would not. (See [Matthew 25:31-46](#).) Again, stressing relationships over rules.

The last time He was with the disciples before His death, He said:

"... I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (John 13:33-35, NLT)

He demonstrated this by washing their feet and then repeated the command several times that evening – He wanted to be sure they got it! His followers would be known by the supernatural love they passed on to others.

The last thing He said to them as He was being taken up into the clouds was:

“... Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20, NLT)

One thing we often miss in this passage is what Jesus means when He says:

“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.” (Matthew 28:19, NLT)

We look at this and think the 10 Commandments – which Jesus did in fact give us. But, while He was here on earth, He was much more focused on how we treated each other than on any of the specific commandments.

He had much more to say about loving people than the specifics of the 10 Commandments. He even expressed this love as a “new” commandment.

The mission Jesus laid out for His followers was to love others in the same way He did. And then, when someone comes to Him, help them to learn how to love in the same way.

You can be technically correct in keeping the 10 Commandments as the Jews of Jesus’ time were; but, if you don’t have God’s love shining out from your life, you’re not following Him.

Paul confirmed this in [1 Corinthians 13](#). He points out that:

- You can speak in tongues
- You can have the gift of prophecy
- You can understand the mysteries of spirituality
- You can have the faith to move mountains
- You can become a martyr

But if you don’t have love, it’s all empty and worthless. It doesn’t bring you, or anyone else, any good!

This is also confirmed by the Apostle John who wrote:

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

... Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us ...

If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-12, 20, NLT)

What God wants more than anything is for you to tell the truth about His incredible love by your actions as well as your words.

The Gospel Commission, the mission Jesus lays out for you and me, is to demonstrate God's love with your life and to support it with your words.

God wants you to *Love Like Jesus!*

Spiritual Health

There is some bad news in all of this. Are you ready for it?

James, the brother of Jesus, writes:

Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (James 4:17, NLT)

Following Jesus is much more about doing the right thing than avoiding the bad. For most of us, our sinfulness doesn't express itself in bad actions. It's demonstrated by what we're missing.

When Jesus gave the "New Commandment" He didn't tell you to stop doing bad things, He said to love others in the same selfless way Jesus loves you.

In his letter to the Philippian believers, Paul wrote:

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8, NLT)

The love Jesus demonstrated had no limit. He chose to set aside His rights as God so He could save you.

And then He commands you and I to do the same thing. To give up your rights in order to demonstrate Jesus like love for others.

When He said you need to die to yourself, it wasn't just a clever catch phrase – something to put on a thought-provoking poster. It's a description of what actually needs to take place. (See [Matthew 16:24-27](#), [Mark 8:34-38](#), and [John 12:23-26](#).)

Your mission is not to see how comfortable you can get on this earth. Your mission is to follow Jesus.

Dying to yourself means:

- You're choosing to put God's priorities above your own.
- You're learning to trust Him as He leads you through the twists and turns of life.

- You're understanding that your actions do make an eternal difference in other people's lives – either for good or for bad.
- You're accepting your role as His chosen messenger to people within your circle of influence.

This is probably one of the best indicators of your relationship with Jesus. The more you unselfishly love others, the more Jesus is a part of your life. Jesus in your life and loving others go together.

Loving others the way Jesus does, is not possible apart from Him. You cannot generate this kind of love from within yourself.

Paul wrote:

... I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2, NLT)

Paul is telling you:

- Give God your body – That's where you live, give Him access to every part of it.
- Let God transform you from the inside out – to change the way you think and relate to others
- Then you will grow close enough to God to recognize His leading in your life.

In a practical sense, this takes place day by day as you spend time reading the Bible for the purpose of coming to know God better.

Make this prayer of David your daily prayer inviting God to check you out and lead you:

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24, NLT)

He will lead you through things you read in the Bible, through impressions to connect with someone, through conversations you have with others.

Ask Him to help you say yes whenever He points to the path He wants you to take.

You can recognize His voice because it will always point you towards loving others in ways similar to the way He loves you.

Make this passage one of your guiding principles:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV)

When God does direct you and points you in the right direction, choose to trust Him enough to do what He asks you to do.

The prophet Micah summed up your walk with God like this:

... The LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8, NLT)

Your mission is to *Love Like Jesus* – nothing more, nothing less.

And you can only *Love Like Jesus* when He is living in you!

Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Messages in this Series (click on the title to download it)

- May 9, 2020 – *Dead or Alive?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 16, 2020 – *Symptom or Disease?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 30, 2020 – *Out or In?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 6, 2020 – *Starve or Eat?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 13, 2020 – *Atrophy or Exercise?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 20, 2020 – *Just Love?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 4, 2020 – *Am I a Hypocrite?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 11, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 1* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- July 18, 2020 – *Burn Out or Rest? – Part 2* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Aug. 1, 2020 – *A Look Back* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

Scripture References

Genesis 2:1-3 (NLT): *So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ² On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.* ([Genesis 2:1-3](#), NLT)

Psalms 139 (NLT): *O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ² You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. ³ You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. ⁴ You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. ⁵ You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!*

⁷ I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸ If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹ If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. ¹¹ I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to

become night – ¹² but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it. ¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

¹⁷ How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! ¹⁸ I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

¹⁹ O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers! ²⁰ They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name. ²¹ O LORD, shouldn’t I hate those who hate you? Shouldn’t I despise those who oppose you? ²² Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

(Psalm 139, NLT)

Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV): Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. ⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:5-12, NIV)

Isaiah 1:10-20 (NLT): Listen to the LORD, you leaders of “Sodom.” Listen to the law of our God, people

of “Gomorrhah.” ¹¹ “What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?” says the LORD. “I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. ¹² When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony?

¹³ Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me! As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting – they are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings. ¹⁴ I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! ¹⁵ When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins

out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. ⁷ Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

¹⁸ “Come now, let’s settle this,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool. ¹⁹ If you will only obey me, you will have plenty to eat. ²⁰ But if you turn away and refuse to listen, you will be devoured by the sword of your enemies. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Isaiah 1:10-20, NLT)

Isaiah 56:1-8 (NLT): This is what the LORD says:

“Be just and fair to all. Do what is right and good, for I am coming soon to rescue you and to display my righteousness among you. ² Blessed are all those who are careful to do this. Blessed are those who honor my Sabbath days of rest and keep themselves from doing wrong.

³ “Don’t let foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD say, ‘The LORD will never let me be part of his people.’ And don’t let the eunuchs say, ‘I’m a dried-up tree with no children and no future.’ ⁴ For this is what the LORD says: *I will bless those eunuchs who keep my Sabbath days holy and who choose to do what pleases me and commit their lives to me.* ⁵ I will give them – within the walls of my house – a memorial and a name far greater than sons and daughters could give. For the name I give them is an everlasting one. It will never disappear!

⁶ “*I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD, who serve him and love his name, who worship him and do not desecrate the Sabbath day of rest, and who hold fast to my covenant.* ⁷ I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations. ⁸ For the Sovereign LORD, who brings back the outcasts of Israel, says: *I will bring others, too, besides my people Israel.*” (Isaiah 56:1-8, NLT)

Isaiah 58 (NLT): “Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! ² Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. ³ ‘We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’

“I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. ⁴ What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. ⁵ You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?

⁶ “No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind

people. ⁷ Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

⁸ “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. ⁹ Then when you call, the LORD will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply.

“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! ¹⁰ Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. ¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. ¹² Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

¹³ “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don’t pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD’s holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly. ¹⁴ Then the LORD will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Isaiah 58, NLT)

Isaiah 64:1-6 (NLT): *Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! ² As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil, your coming would make the nations tremble. Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame! ³ When you came down long ago, you did awesome deeds beyond our highest expectations. And oh, how the mountains quaked! ⁴ For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! ⁵ You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways. But you have been very angry with us, for we are not godly. We are constant sinners; how can people like us be saved? ⁶ We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. ⁷ Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins. (Isaiah 64:1-6, NLT)*

Jeremiah 13:23 (NIV): *Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil. (Jeremiah 13:23, NIV)*

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT): *“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.*

³³ *“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my*

people.³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NIV)

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT): *And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.*
(Ezekiel 36:26-27, NLT)

Micah 6:8 (NLT): *No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8, NLT)

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): *Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”* (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)

Matthew 16:24-27 (NLT): *Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.²⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?²⁷ For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds.”* (Matthew 16:24-27, NLT)

Matthew 25:31-46 (NLT): *“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.*

³⁴ *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’*

³⁷ *“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink?³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’*

⁴⁰ *“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’*

⁴¹ *“Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.⁴² For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I*

was thirsty, and you didn't give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn't give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

⁴⁴ "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?'

⁴⁵ "And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.'

⁴⁶ "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."
([Matthew 25:31-46](#), NLT)

Matthew 28:118-20 (NLT): *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* ([Matthew 28:18-20](#), NLT)

Mark 8:34-38 (NLT): *Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷ Is anything worth more than your soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."* ([Mark 8:34-38](#), NLT)

Mark 12:28-34 (NLT): *One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

²⁹ Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. ³⁰ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' ³¹ The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

³² The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³ And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."

³⁴ Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. ([Mark 12:28-34](#), NLT)

John 12:23-26 (NLT): *Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels – a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. (John 12:23-26, NLT)*

John 13:33-35 (NLT): *Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:33-35, NLT)*

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT): *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2, NLT)*

1 Corinthians 13 (NLT): *If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.*

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! ⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! ¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

¹³ Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13, NLT)

Galatians 5:22-26 (NLT): *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (Galatians 5:22-26, NLT)*

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT): *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.*

⁴ *But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.*

⁸ *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:1-10, NLT)*

Philippians 2:1-18 (NLT): *Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? ² Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.*

³ *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

⁵ *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

⁶ *Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.*

⁷ *Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

⁹ *Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven*

and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

¹⁴ Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵ so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. ¹⁷ But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. ¹⁸ Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

([Philippians 2:1-18](#), NLT)

Colossians 2:16-23 (NLT): So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. ¹⁷ For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. ¹⁸ Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, ¹⁹ and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

²⁰ You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, ²¹ "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!"? ²² Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. ²³ These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

([Colossians 2:16-23](#), NLT)

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT): All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), NLT)

James 4:1-17 (NLT): What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? ² You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. ³ And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong – you want only what will give you pleasure.

⁴ You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. ⁵ Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. ⁶ And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" ([Proverbs 3:34](#))

⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. ⁹ Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

¹¹ Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹² God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

¹³ Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog – it's here a little while, then it's gone. ¹⁵ What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

¹⁷ Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.
([James 4:1-17](#), NLT)

1 Peter 2:21-25 (NLT): For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

²² He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. ²³ He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. ²⁴ He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. ²⁵ Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

([1 Peter 2:21-25](#), NLT)

1 John 3:11-24 (NLT): This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. ¹³ So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

¹⁶ We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion – how can God’s love be in that person?

¹⁸ Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. ¹⁹ Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. ²⁰ Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

²¹ Dear friends, if we don’t feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. ²² And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

²³ And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey God’s commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. (1 John 3:11-24, NLT)

1 John 4:7-20 (NLT): *Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

¹³ And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

¹⁸ Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-20, NLT)

Revelation 21:1-8 (NLT): *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

⁸ “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars – their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (Revelation 21:1-8, NLT)

E.G. White References

Steps to Christ, page 35: *Study God's word prayerfully. That word presents before you, in the law of God and the life of Christ, the great principles of holiness, without which “no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14. It convinces of sin; it plainly reveals the way of salvation. Give heed to it as the voice of God speaking to your soul.*

As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but – O wondrous love! – God in Christ is “reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.

When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” and that you may be saved by His matchless love. 1 Timothy 1:15. Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his Lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his Lord most. Simon answered, “He to whom he forgave most.” Luke 7:43. We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to

whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest to His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition. (**Steps to Christ, page 35**)

Steps to Christ, pages 62-63: *The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.*

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

*More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Galatians 2:20**. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." **Matthew 10:20**. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.*

*So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (**Steps to Christ, pages 62-63**)*