



Photo by [Vlad Kutepov](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Love Like Jesus

Last week we talked about our mission – which is to *Love Like Jesus*.

Jesus wants you to love others enough to care for them like you would care for yourself and your family – both for their immediate physical needs and their eternal spiritual needs.

He set the standard of this self-sacrificing love by giving what He called 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 13:34-35](#), NLT)

Paul explained this in his letter to the Philippians:

*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)

We can understand what this love looks like by:

- *Studying the life of Jesus* while He was here on the earth. As we examine His life through the Gospels ([Mathew](#), [Mark](#), [Luke](#), & [John](#)), we will begin understanding what Godly love looks like.

- *Noting what Jesus said the judgement would be based on, especially in [Matthew 25:31-46](#). He made it clear that those who would be saved would be those whose lives demonstrated a pattern of unselfish love for others. He noted those who would be lost are simply those who are too busy and distracted with their own lives to notice and respond to the needs around them. Those who *Love Like Jesus* will be taken to Heaven, those who don't, will be lost.*
- *Looking at passages in the Bible where the characteristics of love are listed and contrasted with what a lack of love looks like – passages like [1 Corinthians 13](#), [Galatians 5:16-26](#) and [1 John 3:11-24](#).*

This love cannot be manufactured or faked. It only comes from a connection with Jesus. And He made it clear that *it would be exhibited in the lives of all His true followers*.

Whatever else He may be calling you to do, the prominent characteristic of your life as His follower must be that you *Love Like Jesus*.

It is this love – applied on a personal, individual basis – that will attract people to Jesus.

Evangelistic crusades, Revelation Seminars, Bible study groups, or church services may change people's minds about what is true or false; but, it will never changes hearts unless there are people sharing unselfish, Christ-like love to the individuals participating.

So what does this have to do with how we relate to our government and the political process.

Let's start by examining the relationship the early Christian Church had with their government.

The governments – both the local and international level – were largely corrupt and unsympathetic.

The rulers generally gain their positions through intrigue, bribery, and violence. Most of the rulers – including the High Priest and many of the top Jewish Leaders – were growing wealthy through repression and extortion.

They cared little for the people they governed – only about their own security and enrichment.

As we can observe in the arrest and death of Jesus, there was not much concern about truth or justice.

It was in this environment that Jesus, responding to a question meant to trap Him, said:

... *"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."*  
([Matthew 22:21](#), NLT)

In this statement, the only one He made regarding secular government, Jesus stated that we have an obligation to those in authority over us – both God and the government.

The Apostle Paul wrote a bit more about relating to the government (even a corrupt one). He wrote:

*Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. (Romans 13:1, NLT)*

A little later in the same chapter, he continued:

*Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. (Romans 13:7, NLT)*

The Apostle Peter wrote:

*For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority – whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. (1 Peter 2:13-14, NLT)*

The Bible makes it clear that we, as Christians are to be good citizens of what ever country we live in, by submitting to its rules.

But, it also makes it clear that our first allegiance is to God.

Peter, who wrote the words above also had this experience and spoke these words:

*So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.*

*But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20, NLT)*

So, what can we take from this in a practical sense as we live our lives day by day?

Here is the principle I see. Our first allegiance is always to God. However, unless our local or national government is asking something of us that contradicts what God is asking, we also owe them obedience and support. Our personal desires and likes are to be put aside if need be.

## Politics

In the period of the early Christian Church there were people from all walks of life who committed themselves to following God. These people ranged from slaves, humble peasants, all the way up to people who worked in Caesar's household.

But, there was not much involvement in politics. The early Christians were known for the love they expressed in their actions towards others. They were unified in following Jesus, because they had allowed the Holy Spirit to remake them into people who *Loved Like Jesus*.

Over the course of a couple hundred years, this impacted the societies they were a part of in such a dramatic way that it changed the course of history.

It is still the one thing that will make a difference. No individual Christian or Church will ever make much of an eternal difference until they allow Jesus to be in control – until they allow Jesus to express this kind of love through them.

There are no substitutes or shortcuts. This is not one of the gifts of the Spirit that some people have and others don't. This is what everyone of us, as a follower of Jesus, is called to do.

After some time, the church started changing. Religious leaders started looking to the government arbitrate differences in theology and for power to advance their cause.

This ushered in a period of several hundred years where love stopped being the dominant force in Christianity. During this time governments were controlled by the church and the result was a period of time in history we call the Dark Ages.

It's never a pretty picture when religion controls government. It doesn't matter if the religion is Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, or secular humanism. It always stifles growth and results in persecution of groups who have different beliefs.

Many of the worst atrocities this world has ever seen were done in the name of religion – the Christian version as bad as any others.

The reason this doesn't work is that the principles of God's government are different than the principles of this world's governments.

Worldly kingdoms grow and bring about their will by force. The kingdom that has the greatest force usually is the top ruler. It's about the strongest power dominating others for their own advantage and well-being.

Christianity functions through love and selflessness. It's most effectively advanced when followers of Jesus willingly give up their rights and comfort in order to love and help others.

While there have been Godly men in high places all through history, nothing good has ever come when any religion has control or undue influence on the Government – which is why our founding fathers made such an effort to be sure there was separation of church and state.

The current push in our country by Evangelical Christians to control the government in order to advance their agenda does not only disregard our Constitution, but is as dangerous now as it was during the Dark Ages.

Legislated morality won't advance God's cause, because it doesn't reflect His love.

It won't bring greater peace and understanding, only greater persecution of those whom they see as standing in their way.

An experiment in legislated morality was prohibition in the early 1900s.

It began in the late 1800's as a religious movement against drinking. As it gained momentum, they sought to change the laws to make drinking illegal thinking that would help solve the problem with alcohol.

It finally went into law around the time of World War 1. It was a failure. It made criminals more creative and violent – crime and alcoholism increased significantly. And it was finally repealed in 1933.

Legislated morality never changes lives – it may drive what the current religious powers deem immoral underground, but will not change the fabric of society.

Contrast that with the spiritual revivals that took place in the mid 1800s where people gave their lives to Jesus. In many places bars and questionable establishments went out of business because as people came to Jesus, those things no longer held their interest. As a result, there was a significant drop in crime.

Government regulations, while often necessary, do not change people's lives. Government actions will rarely advance God's cause.

God's cause will move forward as His people follow His principles, such as:

*“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” (Matthew 6:33, NLT)*

*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)*

*Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them ...*

*“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 ...*

*“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! 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 ...” (Isaiah 58:7-10, NLT)*

When you trust and follow God, allowing Him to use you to Love Like Jesus, it will make a difference and will glorify Him!

Is it possible that God has called you to work within politics.

Of course it is. There have been many of God's followers in various levels of government all throughout history. Joseph, Daniel, and Esther are all shining examples of God's people making a difference from within a government.

But never forget where the real action is. *Loving Like Jesus* is the way to lives are changed.

For the rest of us, let's not allow ourselves to get sidetracked.

Especially right now with the political battles for power being fought over the upcoming election, it's so easy to get sidetracked.

Let's stay focused on our mission.

Let's keep *Loving Like Jesus!*

## 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](https://www.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)
- Aug. 15, 2020 – *Love Like Jesus!* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

## Scripture References

**Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV):** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

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

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

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

**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. <sup>2</sup> 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.*

*<sup>3</sup> “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.’ <sup>4</sup> 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.* <sup>5</sup> 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!*

*<sup>6</sup> “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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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! <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> ‘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. <sup>4</sup> What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. <sup>5</sup> 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?*

*<sup>6</sup> “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. <sup>7</sup> 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.*

*<sup>8</sup> “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. <sup>9</sup> 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!  
<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.*

*<sup>13</sup> “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. <sup>14</sup> 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)*

**Matthew 6:19-34 (NLT):** *“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust  
destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> Store your treasures in heaven, where  
moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> Wherever your treasure  
is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*

*<sup>22</sup> “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole  
body is filled with light. <sup>23</sup> But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with  
darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!*

*<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted  
to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.*

*<sup>25</sup> “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and  
drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than  
clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your  
heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? <sup>27</sup> Can all  
your worries add a single moment to your life?*

*<sup>28</sup> “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They  
don’t work or make their clothing, <sup>29</sup> yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as  
they are. <sup>30</sup> And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into  
the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?*

*<sup>31</sup> “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will  
we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father  
already knows all your needs. <sup>33</sup> Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and  
he will give you everything you need.*

*<sup>34</sup> “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is  
enough for today.” (Matthew 6:19-34, NLT)*

**Matthew 22:15-22 (NLT):** *Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. <sup>16</sup> They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with him. “Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest you are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don’t play favorites. <sup>17</sup> Now tell us what you think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”*

<sup>18</sup> *But Jesus knew their evil motives. “You hypocrites!” he said. “Why are you trying to trap me? <sup>19</sup> Here, show me the coin used for the tax.” When they handed him a Roman coin, <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>20</sup> he asked, “Whose picture and title are stamped on it?”*

<sup>21</sup> *“Caesar’s,” they replied.*

*“Well, then,” he said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”*

<sup>22</sup> *His reply amazed them, and they went away. (Matthew 22:15-22, 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. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.*

<sup>34</sup> *“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. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’*

<sup>37</sup> *“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? <sup>38</sup> Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? <sup>39</sup> When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’*

<sup>40</sup> *“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!’*

<sup>41</sup> *“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. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. <sup>43</sup> 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.’*

<sup>44</sup> *“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?’*

<sup>45</sup> *“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.’*

<sup>46</sup> “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”  
([Matthew 25:31-46](#), 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?”*

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

<sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> 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.”

<sup>34</sup> 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 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. <sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*

<sup>35</sup> *Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”*

([John 13:33-35](#), NLT)

**Acts 4:1-31 (NLT):** *While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. <sup>2</sup> These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. <sup>4</sup> But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.*

<sup>5</sup> *The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. <sup>7</sup> They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”*

<sup>8</sup> *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, <sup>9</sup> are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? <sup>10</sup> Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. <sup>11</sup> For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says,*

*'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'* (Psalm 118:22)

<sup>12</sup> *There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."*

<sup>13</sup> *The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.*

<sup>16</sup> *"What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. <sup>17</sup> But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." <sup>18</sup> So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.*

<sup>19</sup> *But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?" <sup>20</sup> We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."*

<sup>21</sup> *The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God <sup>22</sup> for this miraculous sign – the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.*

<sup>23</sup> *As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. <sup>24</sup> When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them – <sup>25</sup> you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying,*

*'Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans?' <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the LORD and against his Messiah.'* (Psalm 2:1-2)

<sup>27</sup> *"In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. <sup>29</sup> And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

<sup>31</sup> *After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:1-31, NLT)*

**Romans 13:1-14 (NLT):** *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. <sup>2</sup> So anyone who rebels*

against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. <sup>3</sup> For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. <sup>4</sup> The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. <sup>5</sup> So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

<sup>6</sup> Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. <sup>7</sup> Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

<sup>8</sup> Owe nothing to anyone – except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These – and other such commandments – are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

<sup>11</sup> This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. <sup>13</sup> Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

**(Romans 13:1-14, 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.*

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

*<sup>8</sup> Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! <sup>9</sup> Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of*

prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!<sup>10</sup> But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13, NLT)

**Galatians 5:16-26 (NLT):** So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. <sup>17</sup> The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. <sup>18</sup> But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

<sup>19</sup> When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. <sup>25</sup> Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (Galatians 5:16-26, 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? <sup>2</sup> Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

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

<sup>5</sup> You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

<sup>6</sup> Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

*<sup>9</sup>Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*

*<sup>14</sup>Do everything without complaining and arguing, <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.*

**(Philippians 2:1-18, NLT)**

**1 Peter 2:11-25 (NLT):** *Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. <sup>12</sup>Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.*

*<sup>13</sup>For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority – whether the king as head of state, <sup>14</sup>or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.*

*<sup>15</sup>It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. <sup>16</sup>For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. <sup>17</sup>Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.*

*<sup>18</sup>You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you – not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. <sup>19</sup>For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment. <sup>20</sup>Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.*

*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.*

<sup>22</sup> He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

(1 Peter 2:11-25, NLT)

**1 John 3:11-24 (NLT):** *This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.*

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.*

*<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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?*

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

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

*<sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

*<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.*

*<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. <sup>12</sup> 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.*

<sup>13</sup> And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. <sup>14</sup> Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> We love each other because he loved us first.

<sup>20</sup> 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)