



Sunday December 09, 2018
The Father's Love
Part-6 : Imitating Our Heavenly Father

Introduction

Your revelation of God affects your relationship with God. Your relationship with God also affects your relationship with others.

Our objective in this series on "The Father's Love" is to know and experience the Father's Love. This will change the way we relate to God, to ourselves and to others as well.

Part-1 : Infinite God, Our Heavenly Father

Part-2 : Immeasurable Love

Part-3 : Our Heavenly Father's True Picture

Part-4 : Receiving The Father's Love

Love That Is Uncommon: The Father loves you the same way He loves Jesus.

Know, Believe, Receive And Rest In The Love That God Has For You

Part-5 : Abiding In The Father's Love

TODAY Part 6 : Imitating Our Heavenly Father

Experiencing the Father's love not only restores our capacity to be loved, but also restores our capacity to love. We are able to walk in love, in a manner that is way beyond our own capacity.

His Love In Us And Through Us

Ephesians 5:1-2

1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

We are to imitate our heavenly Father. The first aspect we are called to imitate is to walk in love. The standard is Christ and His example of love and sacrifice. Do what Jesus did. He demonstrated for us what it is to walk in love.

God will not instruct us to do something that is not possible (attainable). Neither will He instruct us to do something that He will not empower us to do. So His instruction to imitate Him and to walk in love as Christ did is possible as we receive His empowering to do so.



When we imitate our heavenly Father and walk in love as Christ did, this is a sacrifice that pleases our Father, a sweet-smelling aroma, the same way the Father was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice.

Walking In Love Is Walking The More Excellent Path

1 Corinthians 12:31

But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14:1

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

After the apostle Paul explains to us about the gifts of the Spirit and membership functions (leading, teaching, administration, etc. etc.) in the Body in 1 Corinthians 12, he encourages us to desire these gifts, but states that he would like to point us to "a more excellent way" or a way that is even better or far superior. The implication here is an even better way to minister to people and serve the Body of Christ - a way that is better than the gifts of the Spirit and exercising membership functions. He points us to walking in the God-kind of love.



Paul explains in the first part of 1 Corinthians 13 that if we exercise the gifts of the Spirit, membership functions and do great charitable deeds even to the point of offering our body to be burned, without being motivated and guided by the God-kind of love - all this is empty, is nothing and has no benefit! This shows the importance of abiding in love when serving and ministering.

Whatever we do we must be governed, guided and motivated by the God-kind of love. Do it resting in and living out of the Father's love. As Paul explains in versus 4-8 if we are impatient, unkind, jealous, boastful, proud, behaving rudely, self-seeking, self-promoting, self-centered, irritable, angered, have evil thought or intent, promoting iniquity or untruth, then we are not being governed, guided and motivated by love. The exercise of the gifts of the Spirit with improper motivation means nothing, is empty and brings no benefit.

The reason love is superior to the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, ministry functions, charitable deeds and to faith and hope is because love is enduring. There will come a time when the only thing that will still be in operation is love - all the others will be reduced to inactivity, no longer in use.

This is not to say that we should not exercise the gifts of the Spirit or our membership functions. Having got our priority right to walk in love, then we pursue the exercising of the gifts of the Spirit and membership functions as Paul sums things up in 1 Corinthians 14:1.

Remember, faith works through love (Galatians 5:6).

[Note: in verse 8, in the context of prophecies ("prophecies, they will fail;") and knowledge ("knowledge, it will vanish away") the same Greek work "katargeo" is translated "they will fail" and "it will vanish away". The meaning is that these gifts will no longer be in use, reduced to inactivity.]

Love Never Fails

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails.

The Greek word translated "fails", used in relation to love, is "ekpipto", which according to Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary means to "*be driven out of one's course; figuratively to lose, become inefficient*" and according to Thayer's Greek Definitions includes "*to fall from a place from which one cannot keep, to fall from a position, to fall powerless, to fall to the ground, be without effect*".



If we put all this together, we get the understanding that when we walk in love, we will not get off course. Walking in love is staying on the right course, the right path. Also, when we walk in love we will not fall powerless, we will not be brought to dishonor, nor will we become useless. Instead we will have effect and impact.

So let us understand that when we walk in love we are taking a path on which we will not fail. Whatever you do motivated, guided and governed by the God-kind of love, will have its impact.

Resting in and living out of the Father's love will keep you on the right course, always.

Receiving His Love Expands Our Capacity To Love

Romans 5:3-5

3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The apostle Paul is writing about our present life as believers even as we go through difficulties. We do so knowing that these develop our perseverance (endurance) and in turn our character and this strengthens our hope - our expectation or anticipation, of what is to come.

Now the expectation or hope we have does not disappoint us. Literally it means that this hope does not leave us ashamed or we are not ashamed of the hope we have, because right here and now we are experiencing the love of God, the Father's immeasurable and unconditional love. This love is poured into our hearts in a gushing, overflowing manner by the Holy Spirit.

This love - the Father's love - is abounding and overflowing in our hearts, both for us to experience and enjoy and for us to give away.

Because of the Father's love abounding in our hearts we are joyful in tribulation and shameless in our hope.

Because of the Father's love overflowing in our hearts our capacity to love others with this love, now explodes. We are now empowered by the Holy Spirit to love others as He loves. We are able to love as God loves! We do what love would do. We stop judging (in a negative way), criticizing and condemning people. We speak the truth, correct and guide in love. We are hopeful, believing and uplifting of people even in difficult circumstances.



Imagine this love carrying over into husband-wife relationships. In fact we are instructed in God's Word to do so. Love as Christ loved. Love with the Father's love.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Our marriages and homes will be an oasis of love in a hurting world. The husband, wife and children would look forward to being at home, to being together because of the overflow of the Father's love. The home would be a place of refuge, comfort, strength and healing.

Loving As God Loves, Reveals God

1 John 4:12

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

No one has seen God at any time. When we love one another God dwells in and is seen through us. When we love others with His love, God is revealed through us. Loving as God loves puts God on display. It brings a measure of the revelation of God through a tangible expression of the Father's love.

Malachi 4:5-6

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

One of the moves of God prior to the day of the Lord, is the turning of the hearts of the Fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. This is so important, that if it fails to happen, the earth will be struck with a curse. Let's consider this in the context of the natural family as well as the local church family. For many their first opportunity to have a glimpse of the unconditional, nurturing, affectionate love of God our heavenly Father is from their own parents. And when this is broken, they are not sure where else they could find that kind of love. As parents, sometimes we either misrepresent the heavenly Father's love or give no indication of His love to our children. For some of us dads (fathers) we incorrectly think that showing affection or emotion is a sign of weakness and is not being 'a man'. This is not true.



Our family needs to see a revelation of the Father's love, His tenderness, His gentleness, His goodness, His mercy, His patience, His kindness, in us fathers. Because of what they see in us, they should be drawn deeper into their love of God our Heavenly Father.

This is true about the church family as well. When the unsaved, the wayward, the prodigals see the Father's love in the 'fathers (and mothers)' in the church community, they will come home. The local church must be a place where the broken, lost and hurting are welcome, and where they will be nurtured through the Father's love into a place of wholeness.

Loving As God Loves Expands Our Revelation of His Love

1 John 4:12

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

When we love others with His love, then His love is perfected, completed, reaches its fullness, and fulfills its intended purpose in us. We grow into a greater understanding of the Father's love for us and are able to let His love do its intended work in us.

One of the best ways to grow in our understanding and revelation of the Father's love is to love as He loves. When we choose to love as God loves, when we do this practically, even in difficult situations, our personal revelation of His love keeps growing. As our capacity to love others expands, we begin to understand increasingly the greatness of His love for us. The more we let God expand our love for others, our revelation of His love for us increases. As we pour out His love, we experience a greater pouring in of His love. A greater revelation of His love becomes ours.

Walking In Love, Is Walking In Union With God

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:16 (Good News Bible)

And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them.



When we dwell and live out of the Father's love we abide in God and God in us. When we abide in the Father's love, we move in union with God. We are actually moving in God and through God, and God is moving in and through us. This truth is so powerful. When we rest and live out of the Father's love, we move in union with God. When we move in love, God moves with us. When we act in love God acts with us. In love, when we touch, God touches. In love, when we speak, God speaks. When we walk in the God-kind of love, we walk in union with God, and hence we are undefeatable. There is nothing that the enemy can do to stop us, pull us down or push us back.

Let us make this our way of life. Let us rest in, live and operate out of the Father's love. When we do so, we are moving in God and God is moving in and through us.

MINISTRY TIME : How Great Is Our God; You Deserve The Glory,

SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday December 09, 2018 **The Father's Love** **Part-6 : Imitating Our Heavenly Father**

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 John 4:12,16*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, What are some changes you will ask the Lord to help you make, so that you can imitate our heavenly Father to love as He loves?



2, We have considered several insights on walking in love. Personalize each of these statements and state a sentence or two, applying each to your own personal life situation:

- A) Because, walking in love is walking the more excellent path, I will...*
- B) Because love never fails, I know I can...*
- C) Because receiving His love expands my capacity to love, I know I can...*
- D) Because loving as God loves, reveals God, I will....*
- E) Because loving as God loves expands my revelation of His love, I will...*
- F) Because walking in love, is walking in union with God, I will...*

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

- 1, families to be protected and strengthened*
- 2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.*
- 3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.*

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>