



Living as a member of God's Family

Class 3: Living by Love, not just by Law



What does that mean?

God took the initiative & loved us first

1 John 4:7-11

7 Beloved, **let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**
8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 **In this the love of God was manifested** toward us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** 10 **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us (Rom 5) and sent His Son to be the propitiation [place of mercy] for our sins.** 11 Beloved, **if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** *[in the same way God loved us]*

God's love caused Him to save us!

God first loved us

A large, dark silhouette of a crucifix is centered in the image. The background is a dramatic sky with soft, glowing clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The crucifix is made of thick, dark wood or stone, and the figure of Jesus is visible on the cross.

Then we will know
God abides in us
and His love is
perfected in us

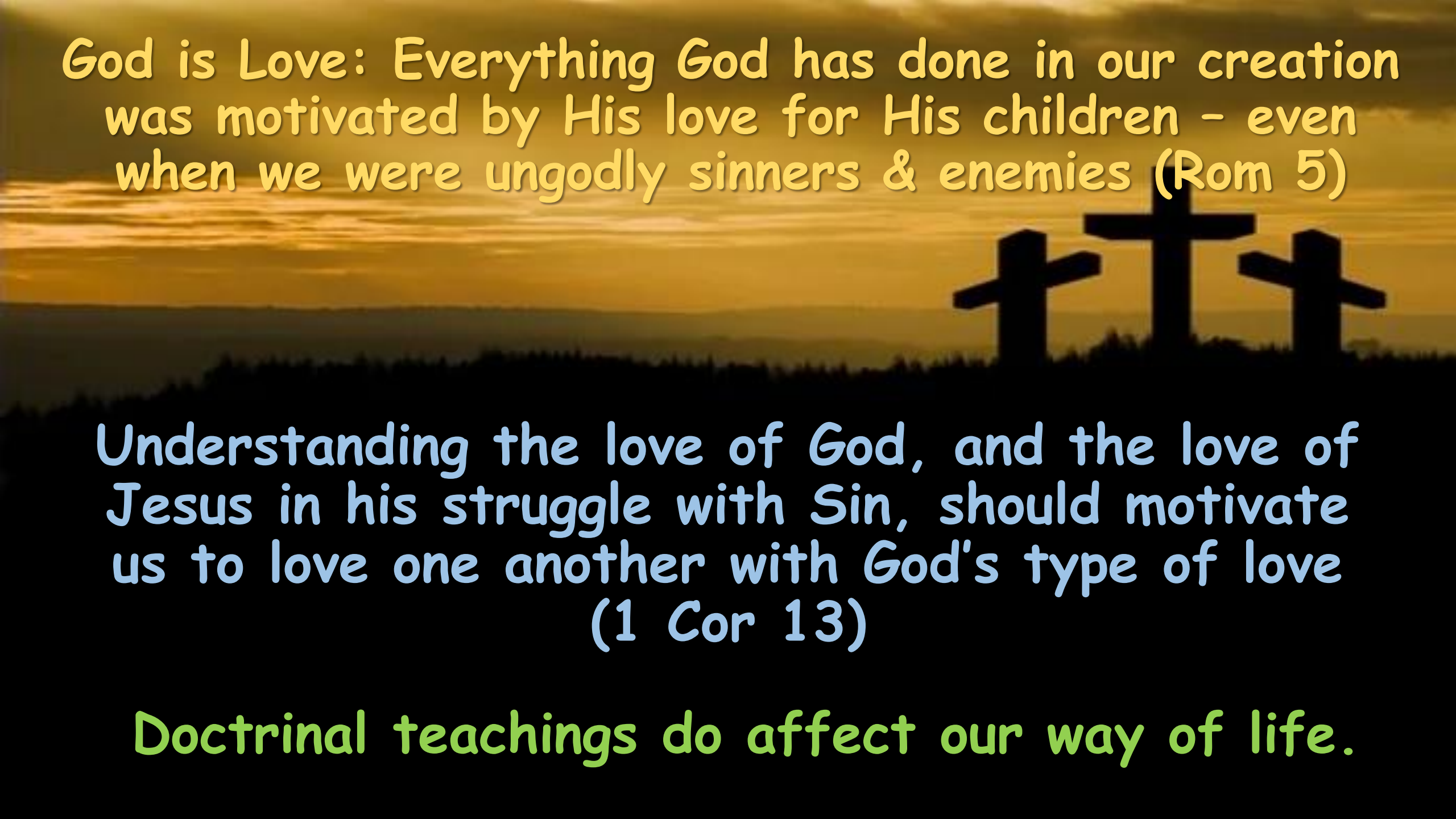
Now we
must
practice
showing
God's love

**God's love in us will cause us to
lay down our lives for each other**

1 John 3:16-17

**16 By this we know love, because He laid
down His life for us. And we also ought to lay
down our lives for the brethren. 17 But
whoever has this world's goods, and sees his
brother in need, and shuts up his heart from
him, **how does the love of God abide in him?****

**Our claim to know God's love and appreciate it must be
matched with a practical expression of God's love to others**

The background of the slide features a silhouette of three crosses on a hill against a warm, golden sunset sky. The crosses are of varying heights, with the central one being the tallest. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

God is Love: Everything God has done in our creation was motivated by His love for His children - even when we were ungodly sinners & enemies (Rom 5)

Understanding the love of God, and the love of Jesus in his struggle with Sin, should motivate us to love one another with God's type of love
(1 Cor 13)

Doctrinal teachings do affect our way of life.

The Process of becoming Born of God

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (ESV)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.** For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

**God is patiently changing our lives
and turning us into His children**

The test for our claim to Know Christ & be In Him

1 John 2:3-6

3 Now by this **we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.** 4 **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** 5 **But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.** By this we know that we are in Him. 6 **He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

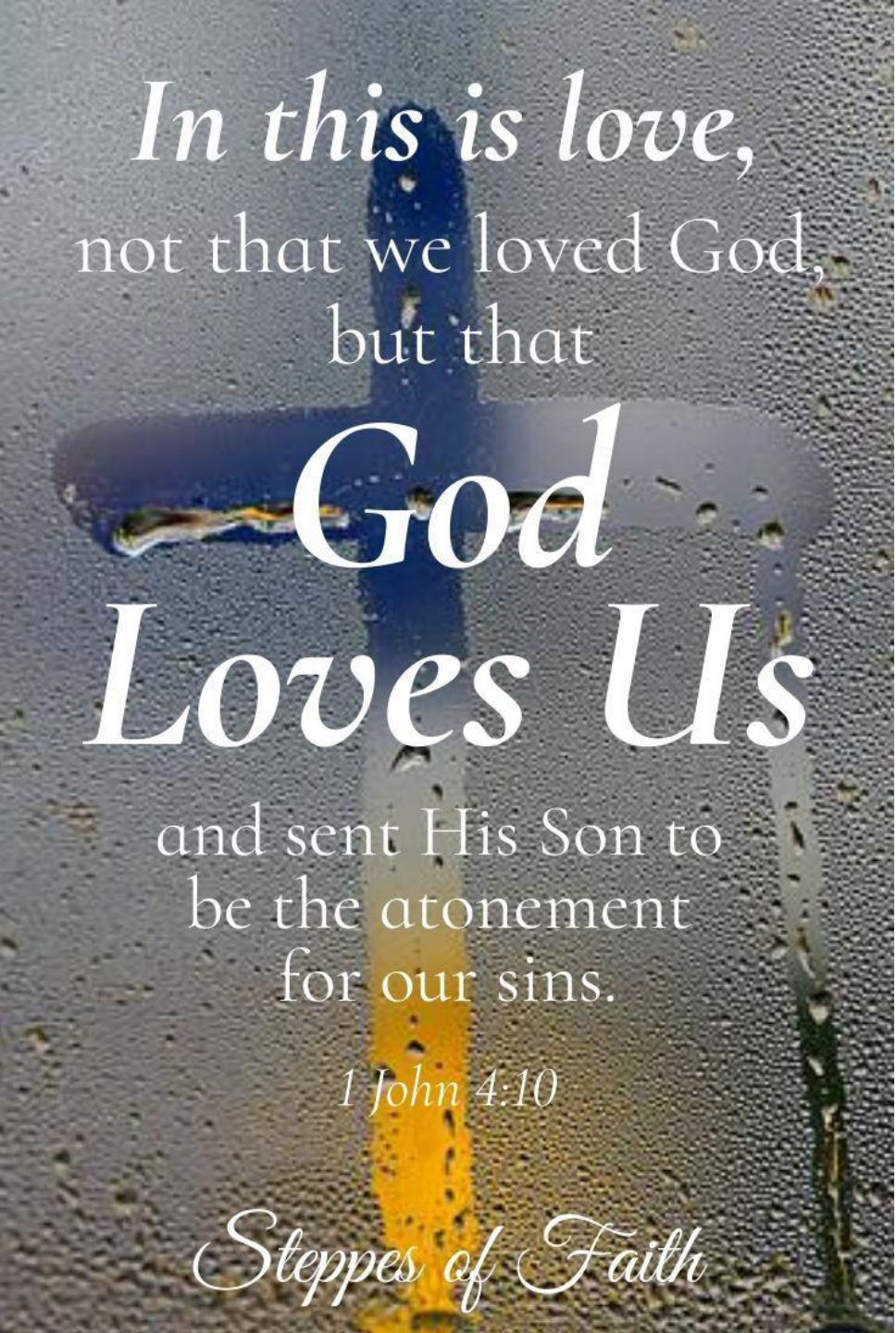
Is the love of God perfected in us?

**God's love can be perfected in us
when we manifest His love to others**

1 John 4:12-16

12 No one has seen God at any time (*Jn 1:18*). **If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.** 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, **because He has given us of His Spirit.** 14 And we [*John*] have seen and testify that **the Father (*in his love*) has sent the Son as Savior of the world.** 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 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.**

God's love should teach us how to treat others

A weathered wooden cross is mounted on a rough, grey stone wall. The cross is made of two simple wooden beams, with the horizontal beam showing signs of decay and peeling paint. The background is a textured stone wall with some moss or lichen visible.

*In this is love,
not that we loved God,
but that*

God Loves Us

*and sent His Son to
be the atonement
for our sins.*

1 John 4:10

Steppes of Faith

**If we misunderstand
the nature of Jesus
and what he endured
to save us, we will not
understand the love of
God and we will lose
our motivation to love
one another**

No one has seen God, but
we can manifest His
character to others to let
them see our God in us



we have confidence & no longer fear the judgment

1 John 4:17-21 (ESV)

17 By this is love perfected with us, **so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment**, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 **There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.** 19 We love because he first loved us.

20 **If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.** 21 And **this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

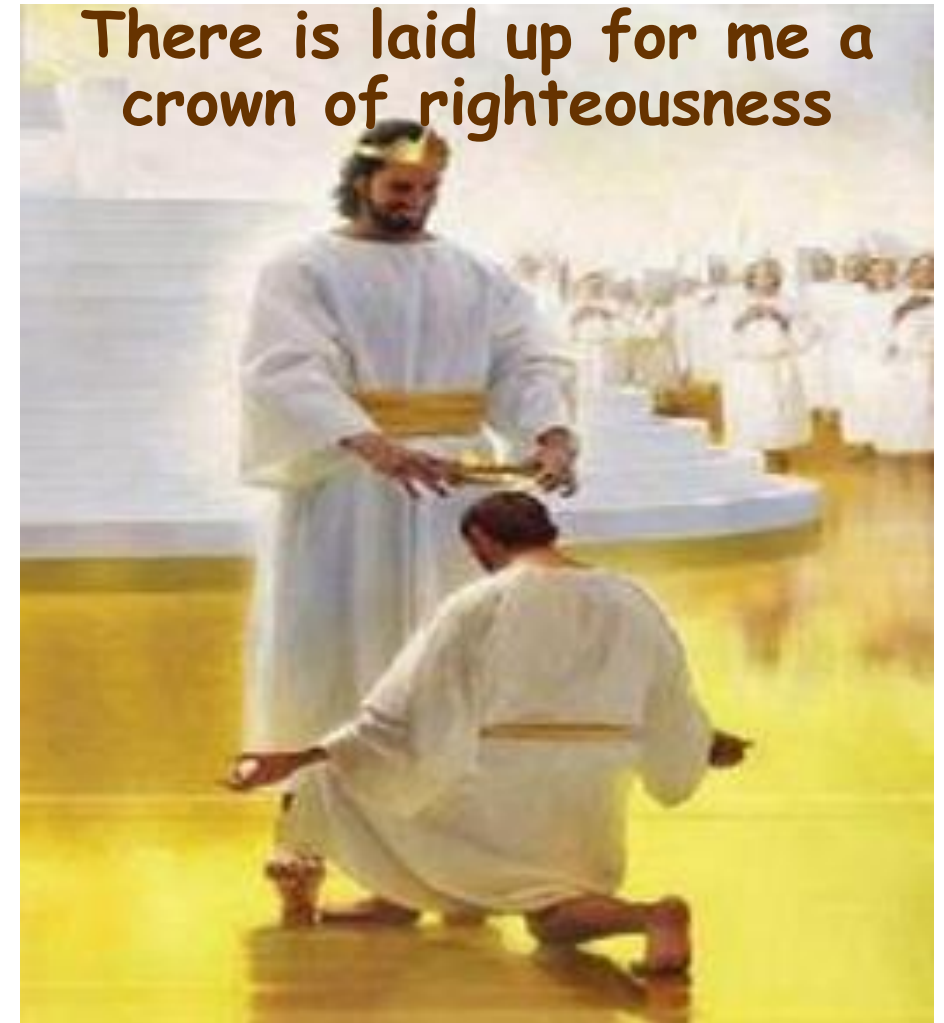
Loving God & His family will cast out fear of judgment.

We can have confidence in
God's Love for us!
We do not need to fear!

If God is for us,
who can be against us?



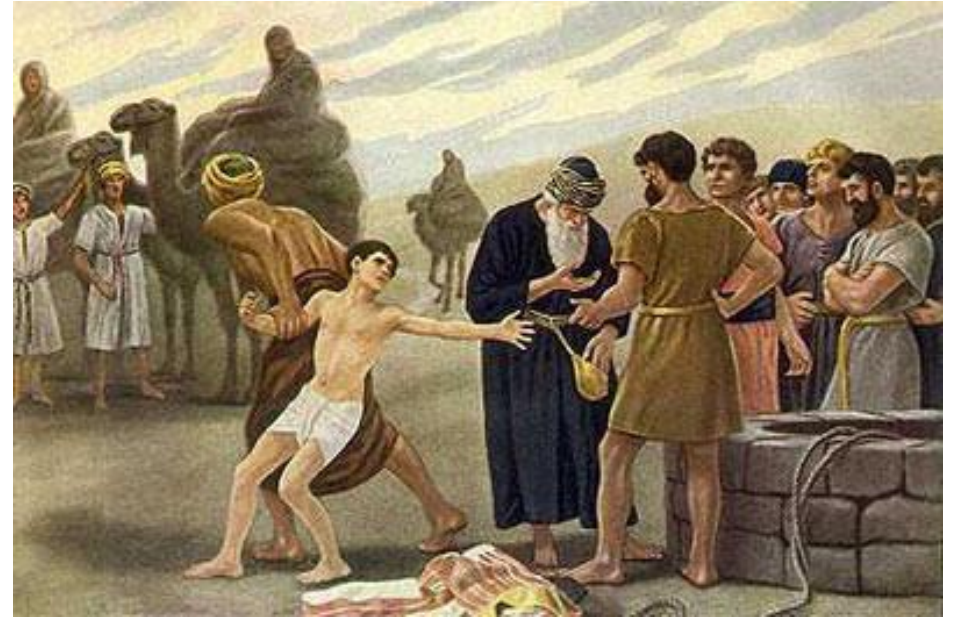
There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment



Our confidence is in God, who has promised to save us

Love has more power to change you than fear

When Joseph's brothers sold him they made up a story about Joseph being killed by a wild animal because they feared telling Jacob the truth



When Judah pleaded with Joseph to take Benjamin's place, it was because Judah loved Jacob and could not bear to see Jacob deal with the loss of another son

Love is a fulfillment of the law

Romans 13:8-10

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, **for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.** 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, **are all summed up in this saying**, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 **Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

Love is an overriding principle that helps us understand how to implement the Law



**Parents lay
down the laws
for a young child**

**Some teens will
challenge laws
and culture**



A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair hugging a young girl with curly hair. Both are smiling warmly at the camera. The woman is wearing a grey and white striped shirt, and the girl is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

**Our
obedience
to parents
and God
must come
from Love**

Why mention muzzling a working ox in this context?

Deuteronomy 25:1-4

1 "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, 2 then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. 3 **Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.**

4 **"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.**

It's about how we treat people!

Paul explains a concept about reading the Law

1 Corinthians 9:3-11

3 My defense to those who examine me is this: 4 **Do we have no right to eat and drink?** 5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 **Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?** 7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I say these things as a mere man? **Or does not the law say the same also?** 9 **For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?** 10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? **For our sakes, no doubt,** this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

Paul uses this again in 1Tim 5:17-18.

This gives us a clue about how to read the Law

Families teach us how to show mercy
to our loved ones who make mistakes



God hopes that experience will teach us how
to show mercy to other families and ecclesial
members who may not be our loved ones

Family life & Ecclesial life will not be perfect!

- Consider Jesus' family & ecclesia
- Think of David's or Jonathan's
- Remember Joseph's family
- Then there's Jeremiah, Samson, Abel, Elijah, Lot, etc.
- God develops spiritual children in the most challenging situations



Don't expect a perfect family or ecclesia
– the Bible makes that very clear!

STRENGTH

A silhouette of a person in a prayerful pose, with their head bowed and hands clasped, set against a vibrant sunset sky with streaks of orange and purple. The person is positioned in the center of the frame, with their body angled slightly to the left.

from

Weakness

So all the glory goes to God

What about adultery? (one of the BIG sins)

John 8:2-12

2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then **the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.** And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was **caught in adultery, in the very act.** 5 **Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned.** But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.

Remember: Jesus kept the Law perfectly

How does Jesus handle it?

John 8:2-12

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, **"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."**

8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, **"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, **"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."**

**Jesus is willing to forgive our past
if we commit to walk in his light**

Look how Joseph used the Law

Matthew 1:18-20

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then **Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.**

Joseph realized Mary was a Godly woman who may have made a mistake

What about David & priests?

Matthew 12:1-7

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, **Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!**"

3 But He said to them, "**Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:** 4 how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread **which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him,** but only for the priests? 5 Or **have you not read in the law** that on the Sabbath **the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?** 6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. 7 **But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.**

Be careful with your use of Law: don't condemn the guiltless!

In the Law of Moses, God describes
the punishments we deserve for
crimes against God and people



God hoped we would learn
to show mercy to other
sinners who repent, as we
hope for mercy from Him



"I desire mercy and
not sacrifice" (Hos 6:6)

The 2 great, guiding commandments

Matthew 22:37-40

37 Jesus said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."** 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Don't use laws to harm sincere brothers & sisters!



“Be merciful, even as
your Father is merciful.”

Luke 6:36

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Mark 6:14-15)



This is the piece we must provide!

Put it all
in God's Hands!

He will handle it best

Like He did with David & Joseph's brothers

Genesis 50:19-21

Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, *you meant evil against me*; but *God meant it for good*, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- This is how "faith in God" changes our lives
- It motivates us to treat brothers & sisters with kindness & compassion – no matter how they have treated us.
- Faith believes that God can bring good out of the worst situations, because He IS in control.

Remember Joseph's Example!

Don't sit around and wait for others to ask for forgiveness
– offer it willingly!!!
Then offer to help!



It's so hard to do even his brothers didn't really think Joseph had really forgiven them from the heart! (see Gen 50:14-21)

How did Joseph forgive his brothers?

- **Clearly saw the big picture** – it's more important where God brings us in the end, than how we got there.
- **Complete confidence that God is in control**, no matter what anyone does to us
- **Love for his Father** – knew that Jacob wanted all his children in God's family
- **Love for the family** – really did love each brother and sister. Did not wait for them to ask for forgiveness!

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. (Proverbs 10:12)



Forgiveness is unlocking the door
to set someone free

and...

realizing you were the prisoner!

A different perspective...

***Forgiveness is not something
we do for other people. We
do it for ourselves - to get
well and move on!***

God may have forgiven them long ago

But...Jesus didn't forgive the unrepentant

The Pharisees



***Unless you
repent, you
will all
likewise
perish!
(Lk 13:3)***

God expects us to repent of our mistakes

Mercy triumphs over judgment

James 2:8-13

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself,**" you do well; 9 but if you show partiality (favoritism), you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 **For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.** 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 **For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

God expects us to render our judgments with mercy

God has provided a place of Mercy

Jesus is the
propitiation (place
of mercy) for our
sins (1Jn 2:2)





Major Warning!!!

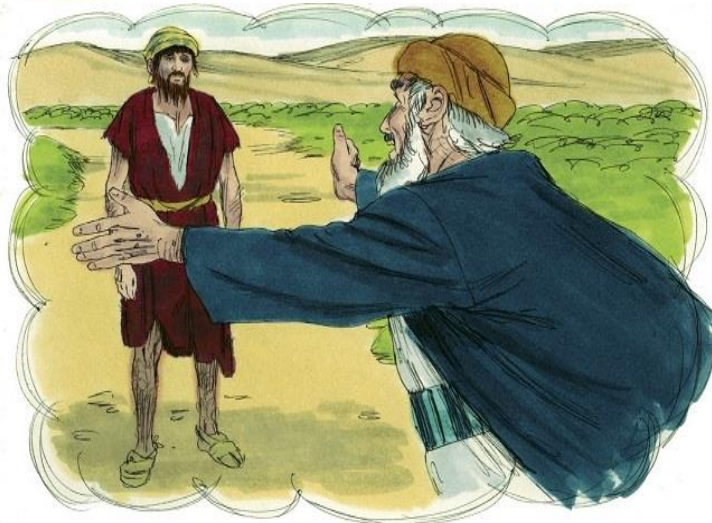


James 2:13

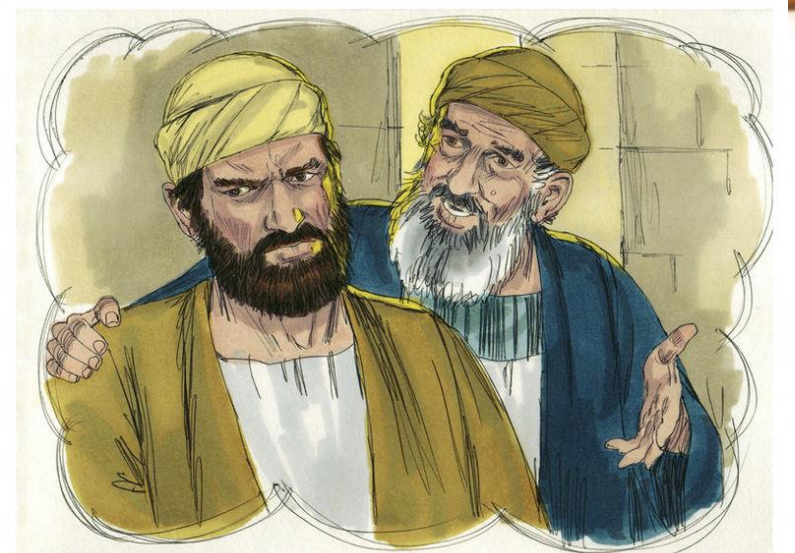
For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

“judgment” s.w. in 5:12 “condemnation”



**Remember
the Parable
of the
2 Sons**



Legal Justification!

Luke 10:25-29

25 And behold, **a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him**, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

27 So he answered and said, "'**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,**' and '**your neighbor as yourself.**'"

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29 **But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"**

Easy to recite Scripture, but hard to do it!

Loving your Neighbor as yourself
Showing Mercy without the
blindness of Favoritism
Luke 10



Mercy without Prejudice

Luke 10:30-37

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A **certain man** went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and **fell among thieves**, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a **certain priest** came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a **Levite**, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain **Samaritan**, as he journeyed, came where he was. **And when he saw him, he had compassion.** 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 **So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"**

37 And he said, **"He who showed mercy on him."** Then Jesus said to him, **"Go and do likewise."**

We need to work on showing mercy without prejudice!

Living by Love also means.....

we will not
let the law
limit what
we will do
for God and
others - this
was a great
weakness of
the law



God taught us how to live by Love

1 John 3:11-18 (ESV)

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? **Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.** 13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 **Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer,** and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 **By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.** 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, **let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**

Love motivates us to help the helpless

The Law of Liberty

James 1:25; 2:12

1:25 But he who looks into the **perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by **the law of liberty**.



The law of liberty frees us from the limits of the law so we can be doers of God's will

Greater love
has no one
than this,
than to lay
down one's
life for his
friends
(Jn 15:13)



Love prevents us from becoming selfish Christians

Galatians 5:13-19 (ESV)

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. **Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.** 14 For the **whole law is fulfilled in one word:** "You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

Those led by the spirit will do far more for God than those living by Law

**If we live
by the Spirit,
let us also walk
by the Spirit.**

Galatians 5:25



Lessons from this class

- Let's learn to show mercy to others the way we would like to show mercy to those we love
- Make sure we are upholding God's law in love – not just as a rigid law.
- Learn to forgive others so we can let it go and then God can forgive us for our mistakes
- Let God's love motivate us so we will not be limited by laws



Living as a member of God's Family

Class 3: Living by Love, not just by Law