

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

2.6: LOVE

1. CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF FILIAL LOVE

"He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." Luke 2:51.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." John 19:25-27.

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Colossians 3:20.

"In His dying hour, Christ remembered His mother. Looking into her grief-stricken face and then upon John, He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son;" then to John, "Behold thy mother." John understood Christ's words, and accepted the trust. He at once took Mary to his home, and from that hour cared for her tenderly.

"O pitiful, loving Savior; amid all His physical pain and mental anguish, He had a thoughtful care for His mother. He had no money with which to provide for her comfort; but He was enshrined in the heart of John, and He gave His mother to him as a precious legacy. Thus He provided for her that which she most needed,-the tender sympathy of one who loved her because she loved Jesus. And in receiving her as a sacred trust, John was receiving a great blessing. She was a constant reminder of his beloved Master.

"The perfect example of Christ's filial love shines forth with undimmed luster from the mist of ages. For nearly thirty years Jesus by His daily toil had helped bear the burdens of the borne. And now, even in His last agony, He remembers to provide for His sorrowing, widowed mother. The same spirit will be seen in every disciple of our Lord. Those who follow Christ will feel that it is a part of their religion to respect and provide for their parents. From the heart where His love is cherished, father and mother will never fail of receiving thoughtful care and tender sympathy." The Desire of Ages, 752.

It is so sweet to know, When we are tired, and when the hand of pain lies on our hearts, and when we look in vain for human comfort, that the heart divine Still understands these cares of yours and mine. There is no sorrow that He will not share, No cross, no burden, for our hearts to bear Without His help, no care of ours too small To cast on Jesus; let us tell Him all.

2. LOVE OF BRETHREN

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it." I Peter 3:8-11.

“These words are not the words of man, but the words of our Redeemer; and how important it is that we fulfill the instruction that He has given! There is nothing that can so weaken the influence of the church, as the lack of love. Christ says, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” If we are to meet opposition from our enemies, who are represented as wolves, let us be careful that we do not manifest the same spirit among ourselves. The enemy well knows that if we do not have love one for another, he can gain his object, and wound and weaken the church, by causing differences among brethren. He can lead them to surmise evil, to speak evil, to accuse, condemn, and hate one another. In this way the cause of God is brought into dishonor, the name of Christ is reproached, and untold harm is done to the souls of men....

“Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions, and we are commanded to follow in His steps Let us remember that God sent His only begotten Son to this world of sorrow, to “redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Let us seek to comply with the requirement of God, and fulfill His law. “Love is the fulfilling of the law,” and He who died that we might live, has given us this commandment, that we should love one another as He has loved us; and the world will know that we are His disciples, if we have this love one for another.” Review and Herald, June 5, 1888.

I pray for love-a true, unselfish love. Not only for the favored few Who wish me well, and who With kindness fill my heart with cheer; But that which comes from above A tender sympathy and love For all who need it, far or near. May Wakeham.

3. UNSELFISH LOVE

It came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin' and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou has written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” Exodus 32:30-33.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Romans 9:1-3.

“Moses supplicated God in behalf of sinning Israel. He did not try to lessen their sin before God; he did not excuse them in their sin. He frankly acknowledged that they had sinned a great sin, and had made them gods of gold. Then he loses his timidity, and the interest of Israel is so closely interwoven with his life that he comes with boldness to God, and prays for Him to forgive His people. If their sin, he pleads, is so great that God cannot forgive them, if their names must be blotted from His book, he prays the Lord to blot out his name also. When the Lord renewed His promise to Moses, that His Angel should go before him in leading the people to the Promised Land, Moses knew that his request was granted.” Testimonies, Volume 3, pages 303, 304.

An Understanding Heart

Could we but know the conflicts of our brother, And read his thoughts, and feel his heartbeats strong,
How many times we'd cheer instead of utter The word of censure of what may seem wrong.

Yes, might we know, and know as Jesus knows, His trials, his weakness, all his motives true,
Would we not really marvel at his courage. Would we not make our criticisms few?

And could we lift the veil to catch the vision Of every struggle, handicap, and tear
Our brother knows because of fettered forces, Would we not wait, withhold rebuke with fear?

And then to think our brother is but human, He slips and falls and errs, but we the same,
Must sink us to the depths of sound contrition, And bring new love our brother to reclaim!

Louise C. Kleuser

4. LOVING GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” I John 4:7-11.

“The apostle John realized that brotherly love was waning in the church, and he dwelt particularly upon this point. Up to the day of his death, he urged upon believers the constant exercise of love for one another....

“In the church of God today brotherly love is greatly lacking. Many of those who profess to love the Savior neglect to love those who are united with them in Christian fellowship. We are of the same faith, members of one family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same blessed hope of immortality. How close and tender should be the tie that binds us together. The people of the world are watching us to see if our faith is exerting a sanctifying influence upon our hearts. They are quick to discern every defect in our lives, every inconsistency in our actions. Let us give them no occasion to reproach our faith....

“When Christ's prayer is fully believed, when its instruction is brought into the daily life of God's people, unity of action will be seen in our ranks. Brother will be bound to brother by the golden bonds of the love of Christ. The Spirit of God alone can bring about this oneness. He who sanctified Himself can sanctify His disciples. United with Him, they will be united with one another in the most holy faith. When we strive for this unity as God desires us to strive for it, it will come to us.” Testimonies, Volume 8, 242, 243.

Cast thy bread upon the waters, Thy holy bread upon the sea of life.
Cast it forth in love, with faith unfeigned. It is the living bread, sent down from heaven,
Teeming with life and making alive who eats. The morsel may be small, but ever multiplies,
And satisfies the hungry soul that faints.

The human sea, how great, how limitless it seems, How restless are its tides that ebb and flow.
The waves that surge beneath its breast, No man can number as they come and go.
They cast up mire and dirt and find no peace. No calm to assuage the heaving chest,
But only faintness in the ceaseless strife.

Cast, then, thy bread upon the sea. The human sea of living souls about to die.
Cast forth in faith, thou cannot tell, Whether shall prosper, or this, or that,
Who shall perish or who shall partake. Yet ponder this well: no bread shall fail,
But return to the giver in days to come. W. E. Howell.

5. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR UNITY

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

"If we draw nigh to God, we shall draw nigh to one another. We cannot draw nigh to the same cross without coming into unity of spirit. Christ prayed that His disciples should be one as He and the Father are one. We should seek to be one in spirit and in understanding. We should seek to be one that God may be glorified in us as He was glorified in the Son, and God will love us as He loves His Son.

"But can God love us as He loves His Son when we quibble and find fault with the truth because it does not agree with our opinions, and for fear we shall understand something as our brother understands it, and so come into harmony with him? God designs that His children shall be one. If this unity did but exist, it would speak to the world of the power of God manifested in His children.

"Christ has said: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another." If this unity existed, we should bear to the world our divine credentials. Christ would be represented by His children. Christ would be speaking through us to men, and we should carry an atmosphere about us that would breathe of heaven. We should not only be gathering light, but also diffusing light, constantly flashing new rays of glory among the churches." Review and Herald, March 4, 1890.

"Strive earnestly for unity. Pray for it, work for it. It will bring spiritual health, elevation of thought, nobility of character, heavenly-mindedness, enabling you to overcome selfishness and evil surmising, and to be more than conquerors through Him that loved you, and gave Himself for you. Crucify self; esteem others better than yourselves. Thus you will be brought into oneness with Christ. Before the heavenly universe, and before the church and the world, you will bear unmistakable evidence that you are God's sons and daughters. God will be glorified in the example that you set.

"The world needs to see worked out before it the miracle that binds the hearts of God's people together in Christian love. It needs to see the Lord's people sitting together in heavenly places in Christ. Will you not give in your lives an evidence of what the truth of God can do for those who love and serve him? God knows what you can be. He knows what divine grace can do for you if you will be partakers of the divine nature." Testimonies, Volume 9, page 188.

6. FRUIT OF PRACTICAL RELIGION

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:9-21.

“The law of God will be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, of perfect and entire obedience to all its claims. To come halfway to its requirements; and not render perfect and thorough obedience, will avail nothing. The worldling and the infidel admire consistency, and have ever been powerfully convicted that God was of a truth with His people, when their works correspond with their faith. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Every tree is known by its own fruits. Our words, our actions, are the fruit we bear.

“There are many who hear the sayings of Christ, but do them not. They make a profession, but their fruits are such as to disgust unbelievers. They are boastful, and pray and talk in a self-righteous manner, exalting themselves, recounting their good deeds, and, like the Pharisee, virtually thanking God that they are not as other men. Yet these very ones are crafty, and overreach in business deals. Their fruits are not good. Their words and acts are wrong, and yet they seem to be blinded to their destitute, wretched condition.” Testimonies, Volume 1, page 416.

“God is testing the characters of all. He is proving their love for His cause, and for the promulgation of the truth which they profess to consider of inestimable value. The Searcher of hearts is judging, by the fruits they bear, who are truly followers of Christ; who, like their divine Pattern, will renounce the honors and treasures of the world, and consent to be of no reputation, preferring the favor of God and the cross of Christ, that they may, in the end, secure the true riches, the treasure laid up in heaven, the recompense of reward, eternal glory.” Testimonies, Volume 2, page 688.

7. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Luke 6:31-36.

“Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.” Romans 12:14.

“While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, “hateful and hating one another,” our heavenly Father had mercy on us. “After that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

“The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 115.

“It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Savior left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says: “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,

and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” And from the cross of Calvary there came down through the ages His prayer for His murderers, and the message of hope to the dying thief.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 109, 110.

“What a world would ours become did mercy reign! The dumb beasts would need no voice to proclaim their woes, the very forests would sing for joy, the flowers bloom where blood was shed, and the lovebirds nest in the cannon's mouth.” Mrs. Schaffter.

THE WALL OF RESENTMENT

A story tells of a merchant in a small town who had identical twin sons. The boys worked for their father in the department store he owned, and, when he died, they took over the store.

Everything went well until the day a dollar bill disappeared. One of the brothers had left the bill on the cash register and walked outside with a customer. When he returned, the money was gone.

He asked his brother, “Did you see that dollar bill on the cash register?” His brother replied that he had not. But the young man kept probing and questioning. He would not let it alone. “Dollar bills just don’t get up and walk away! Surely you must have seen it!” There was subtle accusation in his voice. Tempers began to rise. Resentment set in. Before long, a deep and bitter chasm divided the young men. They refused to speak to each other. Then they finally decided they could no longer work together and a dividing wall was built down in the center of the store. For twenty years hostility and bitterness grew, spreading to their families and to the community.

Then one day a man in an automobile licensed in another state stopped in front of the store. He walked in and asked the clerk, “How long have you been here?”

The clerk replied that he’d been there all his life. The customer said, “I must share something with you. Twenty years ago I was ‘riding the rails’ and came into this town in a boxcar. I hadn’t eaten for three days. I came into this store from the back door and saw a dollar bill on the cash register. I put it in my pocket and walked out. All these years I haven’t been able to forget that. I know it wasn’t much money, but I had to come back and ask your forgiveness.”

The stranger was amazed to see tears well up in the eyes of the middle-aged man. “Would you please go next door and tell that same story to the man in that store?” he said. Then the man was even more amazed to see two middle-aged men, who looked very much alike, embracing each other and weeping together in the front of the store. After twenty years, the brokenness was mended. The wall of resentment that divided them came down.

It is so often the little things like resentments that finally divide people. And the solution, of course, is to let them go. There is really nothing particularly profound about it. But for fulfilling and lasting relationships, letting them go is a must. Refuse to carry around bitterness and you may be surprised at how much energy you have left for building bonds with those you love.