

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2014: *The Teachings of Jesus*

Lesson 7 “Living Like Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Matt. 9:36; Mark 10:21; Luke 10:30–37; Matt. 25:31–46; Luke 6:32–35; John 15:4–12.

Memory Text

“ ‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another’ ” (John 13:34, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. How Jesus Lived
- III. Love Your Neighbor
- IV. Loving Service
- V. Love Your Enemies
- VI. How to Live Like Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. What do you think the lesson author means when he says, “Before the incarnation of Christ, men did not have a full manifestation of God’s love?” (Sabbath afternoon’s lesson)
2. What do the following texts tell us about how Jesus treated people (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:28; Mark 10:21; John 11:5; 15:13)? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. What do Luke 10:30-37 and Matthew 7:12 tell us about how to love our “neighbor?” (Monday’s lesson)
4. What is the basic message of Matthew 25:31-46? How does this analogy compare with that of Matthew 18:23-35? What is Jesus saying about those who live at the end of history? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. Why should we love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:32-35)? How should we love our enemies (Luke 6:27-28; 1 Peter 3:9)? (Wednesday’s lesson)
6. Read John 15:1-10. What does this illustration teach us about abiding continually in Christ? How does one accomplish this in practical terms? What are the greatest obstacles to abiding in Christ in today’s world? (Thursday’s lesson)

7. What is the relationship between abiding in Christ and loving our neighbors (John 15:4-12)? (Thursday's lesson)
8. Does the parable of the sheep and the goats express righteousness by works (Matthew 25:31-46)? What is the relationship of Christlike works to our own salvation? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Remember in Romans 13:8, 10, Paul says love is the fulfilling of the law. The man who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law. He says the same thing here in Galatians. Well, supposing we all obeyed the law and we all loved each other, which would mean we would never be rude, never arrogant; never insist on having our own way, and so on. Would that be a threat to our freedom? We would be really free, you see. So if we understand what the law requires, it's a guarantee of freedom. If God says, "I'll only save people who are committed to the spirit of My law, it means I'll only save people who love one another, and therefore can be trusted, and there will be peace and freedom." Now, Jesus said that and Moses said that, in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded May, 1982 Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>

Actually, what the law itself describes is love; love for God and love for each other. And that's a very personal thing. And love cannot be produced by force; it cannot be commanded. It's interesting that Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you," but there's no way to command love, is there, actually? Nor can love be produced by self-discipline. There can be no love without loveable, loving persons.

So to try to obey the law without consideration of our relationship with other people is to completely deny the whole purpose of the law in the first place. It's like grace. There is no such thing as grace apart from people being gracious. And there's no such thing as love, apart from people being loving. So how can you obey the law, which describes love, in an impersonal, mechanical, unthinking way? It just can't be done. What God wants is trust and love, and those are highly personal. In fact, one could love and one could trust without any knowledge of the law at all. And so the relationship of the angels with God is described in *Mount of Blessings*, "It came to the angels as something unthinkable that there should be any law." I mean, think of having to have a law about trusting and loving people. Unthinkable, you see. When you have to have a law about that, think what that implies about the behavior of the members of the family. When you have to put it up on the wall, "There shall be more love around here," that's a very serious situation. So when lack of love began to show its ugly face, that's when the law had to be announced. I think the essence of legalism is attempting to love. For the legalist will

agree, won't he, that the law requires love, because Jesus said so, and Paul said so in Romans 13:8, 10. But the legalist attempts to love apart from the loving, trusting, admiring relationship with God called faith; and it simply doesn't work. Have you ever in your life, realizing that love is the fulfilling of the law, resolved that you will love if it kills you? And even be specific about it. 1 Corinthians 13 tells what love is. It's patient; from now on I will be patient. It's a good way to get high blood pressure and ulcers and all kinds of things, to do it just through self-discipline. God has said it will not work. There is no way to love in an impersonal, self-disciplined way.

Ellen White warns us of what happens when we try to do this in an impersonal way, apart from a relationship with a loving God whose ways we so much admire. In *Mount of Blessing*, page 123, she says:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works, [that's a way of saying "God I acknowledge you have a right to tell me what to do. I read the Bible, I read the law. If love is fulfilling of the law, I will love, I will do anything you say. "All that the Lord has said we will do" they said at Mount Sinai.] The effort to earn salvation by one's own works, [means on one's own, apart from this relationship with God], leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, [which might even mean, seeing that they fail to love] they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, part 4, recorded February, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMGALATIANS66>*

It's interesting that the Ten Commandments in that way are actually unenforceable. You cannot command love. Though Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment that you love one another." He then could have said, and Ellen White often does, "There's no way you can command something like that." You can't fake love in obedience to a command. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links: <http://pkp.cc/13MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMROMANS66> (Part 2)*

There's no change in the requirements, there's only one law, really, the law of love. Because if we all loved each other throughout the universe, no one would ever be dishonest, no one would ever take anything that wasn't his, we would never hurt each other, we would never even hate each other. Just imagine living in a society where everyone's life could be described by the Ten Commandments. You would never have to lock anything up. You could walk the streets at two in the morning, our daughters and wives all by themselves, our grandmas, and be perfectly safe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 13, recorded January, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/25MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

What are the elementary teachings about Christ? What are the rudiments of our beliefs, as some versions have it? Well, let us ask ourselves. Do we still need the law in order to love God and love each other, and not hate and desire to murder our enemies? Would we murder them if there were no law that says we must not do it? If it's the law that keeps you from murdering your mother-in-law, then you are still very much a child and not ready for the awful "time of trouble".

Let me ask it another way. Which moves you more, the thunders of Sinai or the still small voice of truth? Satan is going to bring great thunder and fire from Heaven in the sight of men, miracles and wonders. If that is what moves us, then we are very vulnerable. We're still babes in the truth. God has used those methods with babes, but He waits for us to grow up. *The one thing that the devil cannot come with is the still small voice of truth, for it is not with him. We must be ready to recognize that as the supreme authority.*

Do you obey because God has told you to and He has the power to reward and destroy? That's the obedience of a little child. Do you obey because God has told you to and you love Him and want to please Him? That's the only reason why you don't murder your enemies. It upsets Him. You do want to please Him. That's sweet, but still the faith of a little child. Or do you do what is right, because it is right? Do we offer God the intelligent, agreeing obedience of free, grown-up children of our Heavenly Father? That is what pleases Him most. Then we are ready for the days to come.

Are we still preoccupied with our own salvation, with what God has done for me and you too, to be sure? Or do we see the plan of salvation in the larger view, the great controversy view, the involvement of the whole universe and the most important truth of all? The reason why Christ died, above all else, is the truth—the demonstration of the truth about our Heavenly Father that establishes this universe safe and free for all eternity. It is the way we are saved

too, that's true, but there was a far larger purpose in the plan of salvation than just to save you and me.

Do you still demand vengeance on your enemies; tit for tat, an eye for an eye? Of course, you wouldn't *call* it that. You would call it *justice*. Do you demand that your enemies suffer all that they deserve in the final fires of the end, or you will not be satisfied? Now you say that isn't a bad thing, it is just that you have become so just that your sense of justice must be satisfied. You demand that wicked people get precisely what they deserve or you will not be satisfied. You would not revere a God who would be so soft as to do anything else.

Or, are you ready to join our Heavenly Father as He cries, as He watches His rebellious children reap the consequences of their own rebellious choice? God does not turn His back on His sinful children. He watches them as they die. He is not torturing them to death. He leaves them to reap the consequences. If you still desire vengeance, though you may call it justice, you are acting like a little child. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 18, "God Waits For His Children To Grow Up" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service

we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. {Ed 16.2}

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself. {MH 409.1}

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. {MH 409.2}

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. {MH 409.3}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . Those who are sick in body are nearly always sick in soul, and when the soul is sick, the body is made sick.—MS. 62, 1900. {MM 238.1}

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them despitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. {CT 29.3}

Through the grace of Christ our efforts to bless others are not only the means of our growth in grace, but they will enhance our future, eternal happiness. To those who have been coworkers with Christ it will be said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” —R. & H., June 27, 1893. {CS 165.2}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ. {DA 297.2}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good. {COL 384.3}

Those who love God cannot harbor hatred or envy. When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennobles the affections. This love is not contracted so as merely to include "me and mine," but is as broad as the world and as high as heaven, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love cherished in the soul sweetens the entire life and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. {4T 223.2}

Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs. The little attentions, the small acts of love and self-sacrifice, that flow out from the life as quietly as the fragrance from a flower—these constitute no small share of the blessings and happiness of life. And it will be found at last that the denial of self for the good and happiness of others, however humble and uncommended here, is recognized in heaven as the token of our union with Him, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor. {MB 82.2}

The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun.

They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name. {DA 312.2}

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. {MB 75.2}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth. . . . {AG 285.4}