

Title: So Now What?
Pastor: Heinrich Titus
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a: The new commandment

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

So now I am giving you 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.”

b: Love: heaven's standard

1 Corinthians 13:1-11 (AMP)

IF I [can] speak in the tongues of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (that reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion such as is inspired by God’s love for and in us), I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), and understand all the secret truths and mysteries and possess all knowledge, and if I have [sufficient] faith so that I can remove mountains, but have not love (God’s love in me) I am nothing (a useless nobody). Even if I dole out all that I have [to the poor in providing] food, and if I surrender my body to be burned or in order that I may glory, but have not love (God’s love in me), I gain nothing. Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God’s love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]. As for prophecy (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), it will be fulfilled and pass away; as for tongues, they will be destroyed and cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away [it will lose its value and be superseded by truth].

For our knowledge is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect), and our prophecy (our teaching) is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect). But when the complete and perfect (total) comes, the incomplete and imperfect will vanish away (become antiquated, void, and superseded).

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; now that I have become a man, I am done with childish ways and have put them aside.

c: Our pursuit: a powerful love!

1 Corinthians 14:1 (AMP)

EAGERLY PURSUE and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]; and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching).

d: The household principle

Galatians 6:10 (NKJV)

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

1. Household: relationships

1 Corinthians 4:14-17 (NKJV)

I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

2. Household: responsibilities

Acts 20:28-29 (NKJV)

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Ezekiel 34:1-5 (NKJV)

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

3. Household: boundaries

John 10:7-13 (NKJV)

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

4. Household: accountability

Hebrews 13:7&17 (NKJV)

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

a: The risk factor

Unconditional commitment, love and service

Romans 5:2, 8 NKJV

² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

b: Stand in, rejoice in

Maintaining the right perspective of life

Philippians 4:4 NIV

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Aspiring to “know Christ and the power of His resurrection” – at any cost! (Philippians 3:10).

c: Celebration – the triumph of grace

1. **Jesus: friend of sinners** – crooked politicians, dishonest business people, immoral women...

Luke 15:1 NIV

¹ Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering round to hear him.

Luke 7:34 NIV

³⁴ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners"'

2. **Quick to celebrate**

Luke 15:22 NIV

²² But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.'

- slow to correct, rebuke, judge, give 'constructive criticism'
- quick to restore: i.e. believe, trust, receive
- slow to condemn, punish or exclude

3. **God's joy**

Luke 10:1, 17, 21

¹ The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places He planned to visit.

¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to Him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use Your name!"

²¹ At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and He said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank You for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased You to do it this way."

Zephaniah 3:17

¹⁷ For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.

d: The heavens – responsive to celebration

Jude 24 AMP

²⁴ Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight]

Luke 15:7, 10

⁷ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

- **Friendship**

Luke 15:1, 6, 9

¹ Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.

⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

⁹ And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!'

- **Restoration**

Luke 15:8-10

⁸ Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?

⁹ And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' ¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

- **Revelation**

Luke 15:17

¹⁷ But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'

e: Religion & law excludes itself

Anger rejects celebration

Luke 15:28-29

²⁸ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.'

Blindness to grace produces suffering & pain

Luke 15:31

³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.'

Nehemiah 8:10 NLT

¹⁰ And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!"