

## Week Six

### The Lord's New Commandment Given to Us— That We Love One Another

Hymns: 867

Scripture Reading: John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23

#### § Day 1

- I. **In John 13, after the Lord Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them that He loved them to the uttermost (v. 1), He charged them to do the same to one another in love (v. 14); then He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (vv. 34-35):**
  - A. **The commandment in verse 34 is the new commandment given to us by the Lord in the New Testament, which is different from the old commandments in the Old Testament:**
    1. The New Testament commandments of the Lord (John 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12; 1 John 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 3:22, 23, 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3; 2 John 4, 5, 6) are not merely injunctions; they are His words, which are spirit and life as a supply to us—John 6:63.
    2. We should love God and His children with the divine love that is conveyed to us through the words of the Lord to become our experience and enjoyment.
  - B. **A way to receive, experience, and enjoy Christ is by keeping His new commandment to love one another for the expression of His love that all the people may know that we are His disciples—13:34-35:**
    1. Real love is the issue of enjoying the processed Triune God in the divine dispensing—2 Cor. 13:14.
    2. When we are in the fellowship of the divine life (1 John 1:1-3), that is, in the

enjoyment of the Triune God, the outcome of this enjoyment is the divine love with which we spontaneously love others; in particular, we love all those who are organically related to our begetting Father (5:1); this love is possible only because we have had the divine birth (John 1:12-13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18).

3. Here we have a triangular love involving God, ourselves, and all those born of God, which is in the organic union with the Triune God who is love (4:8, 16).

## § Day 2

### II. The love of God is God Himself; love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God—vv. 8, 16:

- A. The love of God is the source of salvation—John 3:16; Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:4-5.
- B. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
- C. The love of God accomplished salvation for us; God's giving of His only begotten Son to us that we may be saved from perdition judicially through His death and have the eternal life organically in His resurrection was motivated by the divine love—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10:
  1. In the love of God, the Son of God saves us not only from our sins by His blood but also from our death by His life—Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 5:10.
  2. God loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins in His judicial redemption with the intention that we might have life and live through Him in His organic salvation—1 John 2:1; 4:9-10; John 6:57; 14:19; Gal. 2:20.
  3. God's excelling love is seen in His becoming a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins and the propitiation place for us to meet and be infused with God; God as love meets with us and speaks to us in the propitiating, redeeming, and shining Christ so that we can be infused with Him as love, mercy, and grace for His effulgent and radiant glory—Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 4:16; Exo. 25:17, 22.
- D. The love of God causes us to obtain salvation (2 Cor. 5:18-20;

**Matt. 22:3; Acts 5:32; 2 Tim. 3:15) and become His children (1 John 3:1).**

### **§ Day 3**

- E. The love of God leads us in our living—2 Thes. 2:16-17; Heb. 12:6.**
  - F. God has poured out His love in our hearts with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), who has been given to us, as the motivating power within us, so that we may more than conquer in all our tribulations (8:37 and footnote 1).**
  - G. The love of God works for us eternally—Jer. 31:3; John 13:1; Rom. 8:38-39.**
- III. In 1 John 2:7-8, relating to the Lord's commandment in John 13:34, the apostle John says, “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard. Yet again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining”:**
- A. The commandment regarding brotherly love is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again—1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23; cf. John 13:34.**
  - B. The fact that the old commandment is new is true in the Lord, since He not only gave it to His believers but also renews it in their daily walk continually; it is true also in the believers, since they not only have received it once for all but also are enlightened and refreshed by it repeatedly.**

### **§ Day 4**

**IV. In 1 John we see that the practice of the divine love is the outcome of our enjoyment of the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit, the One who is moving and working within us as the anointing in the fellowship of the divine life to saturate us with all that the Triune God is, with all that He has done, and with all that He has obtained and attained—1:3; 2:3-11, 27:**

- A. If we would experience and enjoy the divine love and have it become the love by which we love others, we need to know God experientially by continuously living in the divine life—vv. 3-6; Phil. 3:10a.**
- B. In order to practice the divine love as a virtue of the divine life, we need the divine life that has been sown as the divine seed (1 John 3:9; 2:29 and footnote 7) into our being; we also need the divine Spirit (3:24); the divine life is the source, and the divine Spirit is the One who actually carries out the matter of loving others.**
- C. We should love God and His children with the divine love and not with our natural love, which must be put on the cross; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.**
- D. Our living in the love of God toward one another is the perfection and completion of this love in its manifestation in us—4:11-12; 2:5.**

## § Day 5

**V. The church life for the organic building up of the Body of Christ is a life of brotherly love—4:7-8; 2 John 5-6; John 15:12, 17; Rev. 3:7; Eph. 5:2; cf. Jude 12a:**

- A. The one who loves God and the brothers is enjoying the divine life; the one who does not love is abiding in the satanic death—1 John 3:14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2-3.**

- B. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them in the practice of the Body life—1 John 3:16; John 10:11,17-18; 15:13; Eph. 4:29—5:2; 2 Cor. 12:15; Rom. 12:9-13.**
- C. We need to lose our soul-life by not loving the world with its pleasure; instead, taking in God and expressing God as love in the church life of brotherly love should be our joy, amusement, entertainment, and happiness—1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 16:25-26; cf. 2 Tim. 3:4; Psa. 36:8-9.**
- D. Brotherly love in the church life is expressed practically in our caring for the necessities of the needy saints without any self-serving purpose or outward self-display; in the sharing of material things with the needy saints, the grace of the Lord's life with His love flows among the members of the Body of Christ and is infused into them—1 John 3:17-18; Matt. 6:1-4; Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 8:1-7.**
- E. Loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers—3 John 9.**

## § Day 6

- F. Loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ (John 13:34-35); if we desire to have the ability to influence people concerning the Lord and to bear fruit, we must have love for one another and become one in the church life; the best way for us to bear fruit is to love one another by taking Christ as our person and life (v. 35; 17:21, 23).**
- G. The genuine preaching of the gospel is a matter in fellowship (Phil. 1:5) because it is a matter of the Body; the branches of a tree bear fruit in a way of fellowship (John 15:5, 12, 17); the more we live in the Body life and have the reality of the Body life, the more we will be fruitful.**
- H. The condition of the vital groups in the church life is that of**

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loving one another in oneness and with one accord; for the practice of the vital groups, the saints need to be trained how to have fellowship that is altogether based on oneness and one accord—Acts 1:14.

- I. In the church life of brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8), we receive one another (Rom. 15:7), have the same mind toward one another (v. 5), pursue the things for building up one another (14:19), bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), bear one another in love (Eph. 4:2), comfort and build up one another (1 Thes. 5:11), confess our sins to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16), forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13), and are subject to one another (Eph. 5:21).
- J. The proper church meeting is a “one another” meeting, a “round-table” meeting, in which we speak to one another (v. 19), teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16), consider one another and exhort one another (Heb. 10:24-25), and listen to one another (1 Thes. 5:20); we need to learn to have a proper mutual care in the meetings (1 Cor. 12:25-26).
- K. We need to be dealt with and built up by the Lord (8:1) so that our administration of the church and our ministry of the word will result in the brothers and sisters spontaneously loving one another for the building up of the church; when the saints genuinely grow in their spiritual life, the experience of the divine life will result in an increase of love, because love is the issue of life (1 John 3:14); this will cause the church life to be living, prevailing, functioning, and powerful.

## DAY 1

### Morning Nourishment

**John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

The commandment of the Lord is His word. This means that His commandment is not merely an injunction; the Lord's commandment is also a word conveying the life supply. In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, "The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." Therefore, in 1 John 2:7 "the word" indicates the life supply. Whatever the Lord speaks is a word supplying us with life and spirit. What the Lord says may also be an injunction demanding that we do a certain thing. Nevertheless, as long as that injunction is something uttered by the Lord, something that proceeds out of His mouth, it is a word that supplies us with life. Therefore, whenever we take the Lord's word and keep it, we receive the life supply. (Life-study of 1 John, p. 144)

### Today's Reading

In John 13:34 and 35... [the] commandment is the message which we "heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). We should not try in a natural way to fulfill this word. We may realize that God is love (4:8) and that we are commanded to love one another. Then in a natural, religious, and ethical way we may try to love others, imitating God's love...This kind of love is ethical, natural, and even cultural. However, real love is the issue of enjoying the processed Triune God in the divine dispensing. When we are in the fellowship of the divine life, that is, in the enjoyment of the Triune God, this enjoyment will have a certain issue or outcome. The outcome of the enjoyment of the Triune God is the divine love...With this love we spontaneously love others. In particular, we love all

those who are organically related to our begetting Father (1 John 5:1). We have been begotten of the Father, and many others also have been begotten of Him. If we enjoy Him, the result will be that we love all His children. Therefore, loving the brothers is the issue of enjoying the Triune God.

Instead of trying to imitate the Lord's love, we need to be constituted of the Triune God who is love. This One abides in us and wants to impart Himself into our being and saturate us with Himself so that we may enjoy Him inwardly as love. This love should saturate us until it becomes the love with which we love the brothers.

The revelation concerning love in the New Testament is different from our natural concept of love. The very God who is love abides in us, and we abide in Him. According to 1 John 3:24, "We know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us." This Spirit keeps us in an organic union with the Triune God who is love, causing this God to become our life and even our being. Furthermore, this Spirit is saturating us with the substance of the God who is love. Eventually, the fibers of our being will be constituted of the loving essence of God. This means that the divine love becomes us. Then spontaneously we love others.

As a child of God born of Him, we surely love our Father, the One who has begotten us. Since we love the begetting Father, we shall also love those who have been begotten of Him. Here we have a triangular love, a love involving God, ourselves, and all those born of God. This triangular love is in the organic union with the Triune God who is love.

For believers to love God and to love one another.. is possible only because we have had the divine birth (John 1:12-13; 1 John 5:1; 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18). We have been born of God, begotten of Him, and because of this birth we are able to love one another.. Now we love not only the One who has begotten us, our begetting Father, but also the ones begotten of Him. This is the love with which the believers love one another in the church life. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1769-1771)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 John, msgs. 15-17; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 163

## DAY 2

### Morning Nourishment

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him...would have eternal life.

**1 John 4:9-10** In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him. Herein is love,...that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

Man's condition speaks of his need for salvation. The source of salvation is the love of God. God's love is the source of His salvation. If God had no love, man would have no salvation. Although God is righteous and holy in His nature, His heart is love. God must do things according to His righteous procedure and in agreement with His holy nature. According to God's righteousness, sinners deserve only to be judged. According to God's holiness, such filthy ones are fit only to fall dead before Him. Although His righteousness condemns us and His holiness rejects us, God's heart loves us. He not only loves us; He "so loved" us. Because He loves us, He gave His only begotten Son to prepare salvation for us. (CWWL, 1932-1949, vol. 3, "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Volume 1," p. 94)

### Today's Reading

Ephesians 2:4 says that the love with which God loved us is a great love. Because of His great love, God came to save us. His great love caused Him to love not only sinners but also those who were dead in offenses and sin.

The love of God originated in God's heart, but when it appeared, it became our salvation [Titus 3:4-5]. When God's love is manifested to us, it saves us. God's salvation comes out of God's love. God's saving hand issues

out of His loving heart... His loving heart appeared through His mighty hand to become our salvation.

God's love caused Him to give us His Son [John 3:16]. God did not love us without taking action on our behalf...To accomplish salvation for us, God specially gave us His only begotten Son. This shows the greatness of God's love toward us as well as the preciousness of the salvation that God accomplished on our behalf. God's great love accomplished this precious salvation for us.

Because of His love for us, God sent His Son that we might have life [1 John 4:9]. The salvation that God prepared for us is not only for us to be saved but also for us to have His life... He was willing to do this for the simple reason that He loved us. Since God loved us, He was willing to suffer the sending of His only begotten Son for the accomplishment of our salvation so that we might have His life.

We had a problem in our relationship with God. Therefore, God sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins [v. 10] in order to restore our relationship with Him. God did this because of His love. Although sin caused a problem in our relationship with God, we had no thought of dealing with our sin in order to restore our relationship with God. Even if we desired to restore this relationship, we would have had no ability or way. However, God's love caused Him to send His Son to accomplish this matter for us before we even had such a thought.

God's love not only accomplished our salvation but also gave us a way to obtain salvation. How condescending God's love is toward us! It accomplished our salvation and devised a way for us to obtain salvation. If God had done less than this, we would not have been saved. Having accomplished our salvation, God entreated us to be reconciled to Himself. We were far off from God, we had rejected and opposed Him, and we were His enemies. Nevertheless, He entreated us to be reconciled to Him...This entreaty is a proof that God loves the unbelievers and desires that they obtain His salvation through those who believe. (CWWL, 1932-1949, vol. 3, "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Volume 1," pp. 94-96)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 50, "Messages for Building Up New Believers (3)," ch. 47

## DAY 3

### Morning Nourishment

**Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

**1 John 2:8 Yet again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.**

In the realm of grace the first thing we enjoy is the love of God...(Rom. 5:5). Many times in our Christian life we need encouragement and confirmation. As we pass through periods of suffering, we may have questions and doubts. Perhaps you say, "Why are there so many troubles in my Christian life? Why are there so many trials and tests?"... Although these doubts arise, we cannot deny that the love of God is within us. From the day we first called on the Lord Jesus, the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This means that the Spirit reveals, confirms, and assures us with the love of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit seems to say, "Don't doubt. God loves you. You don't understand why you must suffer now, but one day you will say, 'Father, I thank You for the troubles and trials which I passed through.'" When you enter the gate of eternity, you will say, "Praise the Lord for the sufferings and tests which fell upon me on my journey. God used them to transform me." (Life-study of Romans, pp. 102-103)

### Today's Reading

We cannot deny the presence of God's love within us...Christ died for ungodly sinners such as we. Once we were enemies, but Christ shed His blood on the cross to reconcile us to God. What love is this! If God has given us His own Son, surely He will not do anything to hurt us. God is sovereign.

He knows what is best for us. The choice is His, not ours. Regardless of our preference, what God has planned for us will be our portion. Everything related to us has been prepared by our Father. We should simply pray, “Lord, have your way. I simply want what You want. I leave everything entirely in Your hands.” This is our response to God when we realize afresh that He loves us so and that His love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. (Life-study of Romans, p. 103)

The commandment of brotherly love is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again.

The relative pronoun “which” in 1 John 2:8... refers to the fact that the old commandment of brotherly love is new in the believers’ Christian walk. This is true in the Lord, since He not only gave it to His believers but also renews it in their daily walk all the time. This is true also in the believers, since they have not only received it once for all, but also are enlightened and refreshed by it repeatedly.

In verse 8 John tells us that the darkness is passing away and that the true light already shines. The passing away of the darkness is its vanishing in the shining of the true light. The true light is the light of the Lord’s commandment. Because this light shines, the commandment of brotherly love dawns in the darkness and makes the old commandment new and fresh throughout the entire Christian life.

After any kind of human commandment has been given, it gradually becomes old. Human commandments are not living. Because these commandments are not living, they never dawn and they never shine. But the commandment given by the Lord is His living word. Because His commandment is His living word, this word shines. When this living word dawns in the darkness, it dawns with heavenly light. The shining of heavenly light makes old things new. In particular, it makes the old commandment new, fresh, and full of light. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 144-145)

Further Reading: Life-study of Romans, msgs. 9, 21

## DAY 4

### Morning Nourishment

**1 John 4:11-12 Beloved, if God has loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.**

In order to practice the divine love as a virtue of the divine life, we need the divine life and the divine Spirit. The divine life is the divine seed that we all have within our regenerated spirit. In addition to the divine life that has been sown as the divine seed into our being, we also have the divine Spirit within our spirit...The divine life is the source, and the divine Spirit is the One who actually carries out the matter of loving others. The divine love is our daily living as the expression of the divine life carried out by the divine Spirit. (Life-study of 1 John, p. 233)

### Today's Reading

It should not be with our natural love that we love God and His children. On the contrary, our natural love needs to be put on the cross. We should love God and His children with the divine love, the love that is conveyed to us through the word of the Lord and that becomes our experience and enjoyment.

How can our love for God be called the love of God? It is because this love is not our love, but is God's love. However, this is not the love of God as it is objectively; it is the love of God experienced by us subjectively. This is the love of God becoming our love through our experience and enjoyment of Him. This love then becomes our love for God and others.

If we experience the love of God, we shall have the deep realization that our natural love is one thing and that the love of God which becomes our love through experience is something very different. One difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.

When we love others, we become involved with them. For this reason, it is often the case that those we love in a natural way eventually become our enemies. Because natural love may have such a result, those who are wise in a human way are slow and careful in loving others. They realize that if you love others in a foolish way, sooner or later that love will cause trouble. We need to love others by the love of God we have experienced and enjoyed. If we experience God's love, we shall love God with this love. We shall also love the brothers with this same love. This kind of love does not cause trouble. May we all see that we need to love God and others with the divine love that has become our experience and enjoyment.

In order to fulfill this condition [of the divine fellowship—loving God and the brothers], we need to know God continuously and experientially..We need to know Him experientially by continuously living in the divine life. Our daily life should be a life of knowing God constantly, for our life should be a life of living God. As long as we live God, we shall constantly know Him.

If we would experience and enjoy the divine love and have it become the love by which we love God and others, we need to know God experientially. This is the basic requirement for having the love of God become our love.

When we keep the Lord's word and receive His supply, the love of God will be perfected within us. This means that as we receive the supply of the Lord's word, the love of God becomes our enjoyment, and this enjoyment issues in a love for God and the brothers.

If we would fulfill the second condition of the divine fellowship—the requirement that we love God and the brothers—we must know God. If we know Him, we shall keep His word. If we keep His word, we shall receive His supply of life. Then the love of God will be perfected in us. Our experience and enjoyment of God's love will issue in a love for God and the brothers. This is the fulfillment of the second requirement for maintaining the divine fellowship. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 139-142, 149-150)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 John, msgs. 18, 27-29, 34-35; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word," ch. 6

## DAY 5

### Morning Nourishment

**1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers...**

**Matt. 16:24-25 ...If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.**

We need to love the brothers. The reason for this is that the church life is a corporate life, a life that involves the brothers. If we lose our brotherly love and if we no longer love one another, what will become of the church life? The answer is that the church life will disappear. Where there is no brotherly love, the church life is finished. Actually, brotherly love is the church life...The church life is a life of brotherly love.

In 1 John 3:14... to pass out of death is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of [satanic] death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of [the divine] life. This took place in us at our regeneration... Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life. To have faith is to receive the eternal life; to love is to live by the eternal life and express it. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 154, 236-237)

### Today's Reading

Several verses after the revelation of Christ as the rock and the believers as stones for God's building, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). To take up one's cross means to bear one's cross. Verse 25 continues, "For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it."...

Please notice that in verse 24 we are told to deny the self, and then in the next verse we are told that we need to lose our soul-life for the Lord's sake. Hence, the self in verse 24 is clearly the soul-life in verse 25. We should not save our soul-life. Rather, because the soul-life is the self, we must deny it and lose it.

If we are to realize the church life, we must take the path of denying our self, losing our soul-life, bearing the cross, and following the Lord Jesus. To reiterate, we must first know Christ in an adequate way so that we can realize the building of the church. Then if we are going to realize the building up of the church and live the church life, we must always apply the cross of Christ to our soul-life, our self, and follow Him. The way to follow the Lord is simply to walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4), for in resurrection the Lord is the Spirit in our spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22). Hence, if we are to follow the Lord, we must know how to walk, live, and do things in the spirit.

The more you follow the Lord, the more you will long to have fellowship with other saints; the more you deny your self, the more you will love the brothers; the more you bear the cross, the more you will want to be in the church. This is a spiritual law. If you love the Lord, you will love other saints. If this morning you prayed to the Lord in a living way, you will find a way to contact the brothers at some point during the day. Whenever you meet the Lord, the Lord will turn you to the brothers. (CWWL, 1963, vol. 2, pp. 322-323)

God's intention in His creation of man was that man would take Him in and express Him. Taking in God and expressing God should be man's joy and amusement. Man's happiness and entertainment must be God Himself, and this is not an objective God but a subjective God. To take God in and to live God out is man's joy...God created man with the need for amusement, but our amusement must be God Himself...God Himself is the unique fulfillment of our need for entertainment. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building of the Church," pp. 103-104)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1967, vol. 1, "Serving in Coordination and Washing in Love," ch. 2; CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, "The Spirit and the Body," ch. 16

## DAY 6

### Morning Nourishment

**John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

**12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.**

John 15 tells us that all the branches should bear fruit (vv. 1-5). A tree has not only one branch; it has many branches, and all the branches bear fruit in a way of fellowship. This is why later in that chapter the Lord Jesus tells us that we have to love one another (vv. 12, 17). If we love one another, the people of the world will see that we are the disciples of Christ (13:34-35)... In order to be fruitful, we have to love one another. (CWWL, 1965, vol. 1, "Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life," p. 281)

### Today's Reading

All people deep within are seeking a life and love in real mutuality. This desire for mutuality is in the human nature as something created by God. Not one human being truly wants to live by himself or herself individually...When we live by Christ, in Christ, with Christ, and for Christ, we have love for one another, and this mutual love becomes a strong testimony. This is the outworking of the inner life and the power to bear fruit.

In order to be prevailing and fruitful in the preaching of the gospel, we must pay our full attention to the Body life. The more we live in the Body life and have the reality of the Body life, the more we will be fruitful. Such a life will be a strong testimony to our relatives, friends, schoolmates, and neighbors. When all these people see the kind of mutual love we have among us as Christian brothers, they will be very impressed and influenced. This will pave the way and open the door for the Holy Spirit to work in

their hearts. To have the real Body life helps us to be prevailing. I believe that this is the very reason why the apostle Paul uses the word fellowship in Philippians 1:5. All the branches bear fruit together, one with another. Not one branch bears fruit individually. (CWWL, 1965, vol. 1, "Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life," p. 281)

The condition of the vital groups is that of loving one another in oneness and with one accord (John 13:34-35)...We must admit that although we do love one another, we may not love one another very much. Because we meet together day after day and year after year, we surely have human affection for one another, but the condition of loving one another in the vital groups should be more than this.

We not only love one another, but we love one another in oneness and with one accord. In John 17 the Lord Jesus said that when His disciples are one in the Triune God, the whole world will believe that He was sent by the Father (vv. 21, 23). This is the way to gain people... If two or three of us go out as one man, the people whom we visit will realize that there is a dynamic power among us. There will be the impact, and they will be convinced. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," pp. 407-408)

If we will give up all the hindrances, bonds, and frustrating elements, the Holy Spirit will have a free way to move. When the Holy Spirit has the free way to move, many things will begin to happen... Many new believers will be brought into the church. Another thing that will happen is that the saints will genuinely grow in their spiritual life, and their spiritual gifts will begin to be manifested. In addition, the saints will begin to love one another more. The experience of the divine life will result in an increase in love, because love is the issue of life (1 John 3:14). This will cause the church life to be living, prevailing, functioning, and powerful. This is what God's people are longing for. Deep in their spirits they are longing for this. (CWWL, 1963, vol. 4, "Contacting the Lord, Being Filled in Spirit, and Having Proper Christian Meetings for the Accomplishment of God's Eternal Purpose," pp. 42-43)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 1, "Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life," ch. 9; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 8

**<< WEEK 6 — HYMN >>****Hymns, #867 As members of the Body**

Meetings — Functioning

- 1 As members of the Body  
Christ we would manifest,  
Each learning how to function  
His fulness to express;  
We would not be spectators  
But each as members move,  
None bringing death or damage  
But each our profit prove.
- 2 As in a team we'd never  
Act independently,  
But in coordination,  
Each would dependent be;  
Not acting by our choosing  
But following the flow,  
Distraction never bringing,  
The Spirit's way we'd know.
- 3 On Christ we here would focus,  
No other center make;  
With Christ in sweet communion  
His riches to partake.  
He is our Head and content,  
His Body we express;  
Whate'er we do while meeting  
Himself must manifest.
- 4 Built up in love together,  
Not one would criticize;  
To perfect one another,  
We all would exercise.  
Each one from self delivered,  
The natural life forsakes;  
In grace each trained in spirit  
The Body-life partakes.



