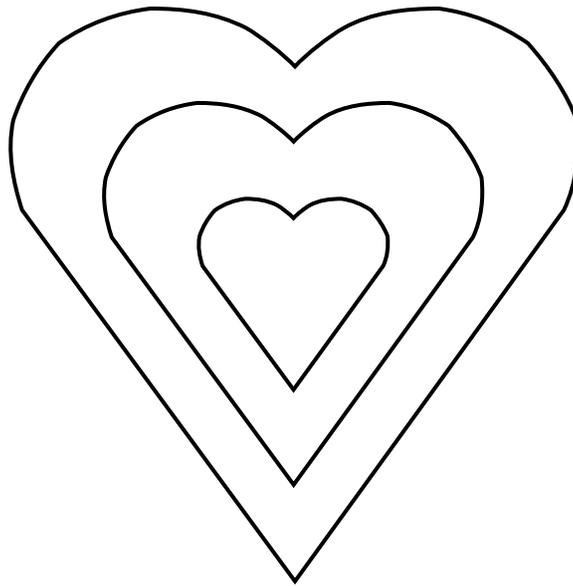


# **TIMELESS LOVE, TRANSFORMING LOVE**



**Mary and friends  
2017**

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## “MARY, YOU DON’T LOVE”

That August day in 2004 was hot. Eighty-two-year-old Edna sat in her living room sipping a cold drink. I sat facing her holding a glass of water in my hand. The 40-year age difference between us didn’t bother Edna or me; we’d known each other for years. She was my spiritual mother. Each week we studied the Bible, talked and prayed.

That morning I remember Edna putting her drink down on the low table between us and leaning forward. Her intense blue eyes looked into mine. “Mary, I want to tell you something.” She needed my agreement to go on.

“Okay,” I said.

Slowly and deliberately Edna spoke, “Mary, you don’t love.”

It was Edna’s voice, but it was God addressing me. The raw truth of those words pierced my heart. I DIDN’T LOVE.

Verses flashed through my mind: *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith . . . but have not love, I am nothing* (1 Corinthians 13:1-2).

Like a flood my life passed before me. I had gone to Stanford and then earned a Ph. D. in Developmental Psychology with the intent of aiding children in need. My husband was a pediatrician and together we had planned to help in orphanages around the world. Then after developing a serious, chronic illness, I’d stayed home and dedicated myself to raising our four children. We went to church faithfully as a family and, as the kids grew older, I began working part-time as a volunteer for a mission organization.

But somehow in that moment, I understood that in doing all these “good” things, I was nothing but *a clanging cymbal*. I slid out of my chair and lay face down on Edna’s floor. I’d gotten the most important thing in life wrong. Even though I’d grown up in a Christian home singing “Jesus loves me this I know . . .,” even though I’d “asked Jesus into my heart” when I was 16, even though my family was active in a Bible-believing church, even though I was doing many “good” things, I didn’t really love.

Something was horribly wrong. I knew I was going to heaven when I died, but I wasn’t living life on earth as God intended. I wasn’t loving. And I didn’t know why.

So there on the floor, with Edna looking on, I prayed, “God, I don’t know what is wrong, but I trust You to fix it. I want to love. Whatever it takes.”

Within six months of praying that prayer, my life was in shambles. The shiny ornaments I had used to decorate my life so that I looked “good,” like I thought a Christian should,

lay broken to bits. My marriage of 22 years began a decline into divorce. My oldest son, a freshman on Harvard's crew team, fell into alcohol abuse, dropped out of school and ended up in a mental hospital. My "good" Christian life had been exposed for what it was—a shiny cover up for the real life God intended.

But through understanding Who God really was, and by seeing how mankind was created to abide with Him in loving relationship, God would transform. . . .

Questions:

Have you ever felt that something was fundamentally wrong with your life?

Can you recall a time when God's truth powerfully impacted you?

Do you think you love as God designed?

## IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In order to fix my broken life, God had to change the way I thought about Him and the way I thought about myself and others. He had to introduce Himself to me as a God of love. *God is love* (1 John 4:16). The trials pushed me to Him; it was there I began to understand and accept His love for me. And as I accepted His love, I began to see Scripture differently.

In the Garden of Eden, when God created man, He said, *Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him* (Genesis 1:26-27).

God made us like Him because He wanted someone to love and share Himself with. Mankind is God's most treasured of all creation. We, and we alone, can know and appreciate God. He put Adam in the Garden to tend and care for the rivers, trees, birds and animals. He gave us dominion over the earth because He wanted us to share with Him in caring for the world He had made. God created man, and man only—not animals, not angels—in His image.

God is Three in One. He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And mankind also is of three parts—spirit, soul and body. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

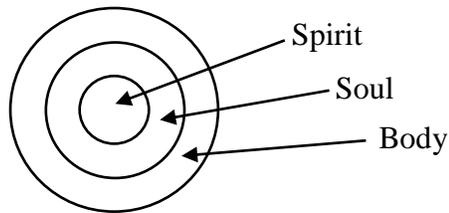
Scripture tells us of God creating man: *And the LORD God formed man [1] of the dust of the ground, and [2] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man [3] became a living being [soul]* (Genesis 2:7). God shaped Adam's (1) **body** from the dust of the ground. Then He breathed into that body His Spirit-breath of life so that Adam's (2) **spirit** came alive. And with that Spirit-breath from God, man became a living (3) **soul**. In God's design, the soul received life from the Spirit.

God gave us a **body** so We could live on earth. Our body is made up of our bones, muscle and organs. We interact with the physical world through our body. We see, smell, hear, touch and taste. The body is like a house for the hidden parts of spirit and soul. *Your **body** is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you* (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Then God breathed into that body His breath of life. Our **spirit** comes alive when God's Spirit gives it life. Like the body connects us to the physical world, the spirit connects us to God. In the New Covenant, when we believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit comes and lives in our spirit. By "accepting Jesus into our heart," we let God have a home on earth—in our spirit. Our spirit connects us with God and is a resting place for His Spirit. *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our **spirit** that we are children of God* (Romans 8:16).

Upon receiving the breath of God’s Spirit into his body, Adam became a living **soul**. He became a living being with thoughts and feelings. The soul is the place of our mind, will and emotions. It is like the bridge between the spirit and the body. Our mind, will and emotions—not our spirit directly—determine the actions of our body. Our behaviors, speech and feelings are expression of our soul.

Figure 1 shows how God created us of three parts.



As a relevant aside, spirit and soul together form the hidden core of man—the *heart*. Hebrews 4:12 says, *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* God knows the heart. He knows what is of the Spirit (originating from Him) and what is of the soul (originating from us).

In God’s design, the soul is meant to be like the steering wheel of a car. How the wheel is turned determines the direction the car takes. But a wheel is not made to steer itself. Neither is our soul meant to guide us. God, in our spirit, is meant to be the driver; with His hand upon the wheel, all is well.

We were meant to receive His love in our spirits, know the reality of that love in our souls and then let that love flood out of our bodies to the world. God designed that we rule over the earth by being in love-relationship with Him and with the world.

But Satan had other plans. . . .

Questions:

Before reading this chapter, how would you have responded to the question, “How are you?”

How is your spirit?

How is your soul?

## ADAM AND THE FALL

Before the fall, Adam and Eve had a Spirit-to-spirit connection *with* God. God did not live *in* them, but He walked *with* them. In the Garden of Eden, everything for full life—right relationship with God, self, others and the world—came through relationship with God. Adam and Eve’s spirit, soul and body were in perfect agreement with God. God gave; they received. God loved; they trusted.

Satan hated Adam and his relationship with God. He hated that God had created mankind in His image to have dominion over the earth. He hated that mankind had been given authority *over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth*—for Satan was that *creeping thing*. So he plotted to destroy God’s most treasured of all creation. In the Garden of Eden, he tempted Eve to fall in the same way he had fallen—by relying on his own soul (his own mind, *will* and emotions).

Long ago, Satan had tried to become like God apart from God. By his own efforts—his own *I will*—Satan had tried to make himself like God. He had said, ***I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High*** (Isaiah 14:13-14). Satan fell by pride; he was going to do it himself—by his own, independent *I will*.

So he tempted Eve to act apart from relationship with God, rely on the leading of her independent soul and express her own *I will*.

In the center of the Garden of Eden, God had planted two trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God warned Adam about the second tree. *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die* (Genesis 2:16-17).

The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not good for man. So, like a loving father warning his child not to eat something poisonous, God warned Adam. Death was not a punishment; the fruit was poisonous.

But Satan reassured Eve that everything would be fine—even better than before. He told her, *You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil* (Genesis 3:4-5). “Don’t listen to God,” the serpent told her. “You won’t really die; you’ll be like God.” The idea the serpent planted in her mind was, “God doesn’t have your best interests at heart. If He really loved you, He wouldn’t withhold this good from you. So go ahead. Choose what is best for yourself.”

The fruit seemed good to her, so Eve took and ate. She gave some to Adam and he ate too. In so doing, Adam made his own decision and acted apart from God. His soul—his

mind, *will* and emotions—chose its own *will* over God's. Thus Adam broke Spirit-to-spirit connection with God; he cut off life-giving relationship. Now the soul had to make its own decisions using its new-found knowledge of good and evil.

And when Adam ate the poisonous fruit, it affected the entire human race. When we are born into this world, we inherit Adam's disconnection from God—the sin nature.

Satan's evil plot killed man as God had created him to live—in Spirit-to-spirit connection. Now the soul was in control. Through the independent soul of man, cut off from relationship with God, Satan could now work evil in man and in the world God had designed him to rule.

After the fall, Adam and Eve's minds were darkened with the knowledge of good and evil. Once their "eyes were opened" they no longer saw God's loving nature. Now they saw Him as a harsh father demanding good and punishing evil. The couple's image of God, self and others was darkened by lies.

These lies changed their behavior. When God came to walk with Adam in the cool of the Garden, the man was not there. The two had dressed themselves in fig leaves to cover their nakedness and were hiding from God. But God searched out Adam asking, *Where are you?* (Genesis 3:9).

Adam answered, *I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself* (Genesis 3:10). Fear—being afraid—is the first emotion expressed by Adam after the fall. Adam's sin nature is fear-based. There was no fear in Adam or Eve before the Fall. Before the Fall there was nothing to be afraid of; they knew the loving nature of God. *Perfect love casts out fear* (1 John 4:18).

But they had lost their connection to the perfect love of God; Spirit-to-spirit relationship was severed. Man was in charge of an earth he was no longer equipped, by God's supply, to rule. Satan working through mankind's independent soul now had dominion. . . .

#### Questions:

What happened to Adam's spirit in the fall?

What happened to his soul?

How does Satan's plan affect mankind today?

How may have Satan tricked you personally into disregarding God's plan for your life?

## MOSES AND THE LAW: “YOU SHALL LOVE”

Man had broken relationship. God could no longer express His love and care for Adam and Eve as He had in the beginning. Life that came through relationship with God had ended. Now man had to live cut off from God and with his eyes opened to the knowledge of good and evil. So God gave clear rules about what was good and what was evil. Because man had no connection with God on the inside, the rules had to come from the outside. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments as guidelines for the independent soul.

God knew what was best for man. He wrote the commandments like a loving father making rules to keep his children safe and happy. Just as a father might tell his child, “Don’t stick your finger in fire,” God made His laws.

The Ten Commandments, along with other laws in the Old Testament, clearly defined good and evil. However, even when people wanted to, they couldn’t obey. The soul, cut off from God, couldn’t follow the rules. When Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai, the people had said, *All that the LORD has spoken we will do* (Exodus 19:8). Yet soon after, those same people had given up on God and worshiped a golden calf.

Even David, God’s chosen king of Israel, failed to keep the Law. He wrote, *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God* (Psalm 42:1-2). Yet David’s soul was fickle. He had an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his loyal army officers. Then to cover it up, he had the man sent to his death in battle. Thus the God-seeking king disobeyed four of the Ten Commandments; he coveted, lied, committed adultery and murdered.

Nothing was wrong with the Law; it was just that it couldn’t be obeyed. The Law was not designed to be kept by the efforts of mankind. It was designed to show us God’s standard that, apart from relationship with Him, could never be kept. The purpose of the Law was not to make us good; the purpose of the Law was to show us that life guided by the soul can never be good. Despite having the knowledge of good and evil, the soul can’t live rightly on its own.

In clearest terms, Jesus summarized the Old Covenant Law—that couldn’t be obeyed. When asked by a Pharisee about *the great commandment in the Law*, Jesus replied, *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets* (Matthew 22:37-40).

These two greatest commandments in the Law summarize what is best for us. *God is love* (1 John 4:16) and He created us in His image to reflect His love-nature. But, these two commands are Old Covenant commands and therefore impossible to obey. Think of trying to love God with *all* your heart, *all* your soul and *all* your mind. How could you

possibly do that? And even if you could, how could you then, having given *all* your love to God, have some left over for your neighbor? And how could you love you neighbor as yourself if you didn't really love yourself, because you didn't know God loved you?

Even though the Law couldn't be obeyed, the Pharisees were deceived into thinking they were obedient. But Jesus called out their true condition, *Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness* (Matthew 23:26-27).

The rules could make a man look good by his own definition—from the outside. But they could not make a man right by God's definition, because right comes from an inner relationship that flows through to outside expression. In God's design, doing right flows from being right—from being in relationship with God. We were created as *human beings*, not as *human doings*. By being in relationship with God—by knowing His love for us—we naturally follow His rules. *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law* (Romans 13:10).

God doesn't define right living as obedience to any set of rules—not even His own. Neither does He define sin as disobedience to the Law. Sin, in God's view, is not just doing evil as defined by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is also doing "good" under that same tree. Both the good and the evil are equally death producing—because they come, not from the Spirit, but from the independent soul. Sin is doing your own thing—no matter how good that thing appears. Sin is missing the true goal and purpose of life; it is living apart from God and being led by the independent soul. *Whatever is not from faith is sin* (Romans 14:23).

By showing the total failure of the Law to make us good, God planned that we would come to know our desperate need for a Savior. *The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith* (Galatians 3:24).

Our old nature always wants to live by rules; the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has deep roots. Every religion of the world caters to the desires of the Adam-nature to do something "good" to please their god(s) and earn their favor. Jews try to obey the Law of Moses. Muslims try to follow the Koran. Hindus try to appease many different gods and goddesses with a variety of sacrifices. We Christians too can be easily deceived into trying to gain God's favor through "good" deeds generated by the independent soul such as going to Church, witnessing . . . or loving others.

I myself was thus deceived. Trying to love as commanded in the Old Covenant was the root of my problem. But Edna had seen past the whitewashed walls and the shiny ornaments that decorated my "good" Christian life and spoken the truth, "Mary, you don't love."

She had identified the problem. But what was the solution? . . .

Questions:

What was/is the purpose of the Law?

How does the Law hinder you from living (and/or help you to live) as God designed?

After thinking about the Scriptures presented in this chapter, how do you define “sin”?

Can you think of a time when you did something “good” apart from God’s leading?

## GOD'S SOLUTION: "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON"

Tragic as it was, God used the fall and the struggles of the people in the Old Testament to introduce us to His sacrificial love. Without the fall, love would not have been able to express itself in full, grand form. God's love reached down to mankind when Jesus became a man and took our place by dying for our sins on the cross.

In the Old Testament, God had promised to restore mankind by making a way for us to come back into relationship with Him. He spoke to Abraham about being the father of a new people who lived by faith.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised a New Covenant to replace the Old. The Old had come from the outside—from the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets; the New would come from the inside—from God's word written on the mind and heart. The Old Covenant was based upon the *will* of man, but the New would be based upon the *will* of God. Jeremiah wrote, *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people* (Jeremiah 31:33).

To usher in the New Covenant, John the Baptist came saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!* (Matthew 3:2). *Repent* means "change your mind." A new way was coming and in order to embrace it, man's whole way of thinking—with its death-producing focus on the knowledge of good and evil—had to change.

In the New Covenant, God took our place in fulfilling mankind's half of the agreement. Jesus came to earth as a man—the Son of Man. As a man Jesus represented humanity in the New Covenant. Jesus was 100% God, but when He came to earth, He laid aside all of His Godhood and lived as a man.

As *Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises* (Hebrews 8:6), Jesus lived His life on earth as mankind was designed to live it. He was not led by His soul. He did not look to the world with its laws and traditions to guide Him. Jesus knew the Old Covenant Law, but knowledge of good and evil did not guide His thinking nor define His being.

Rather, Jesus lived in relationship with His Father. At His Father's leading, He shared His life with tax collectors, prostitutes and others shunned by the culture in which He lived. He healed on the Sabbath, the law-given day of rest. He told a story of a disobedient son and an unconditionally loving Father.

In every decision, Jesus let His Father guide. He took the *will* of God as His own. He said, *I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me* (John 6:38). Jesus said, *The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does* (John 5:19-20).

Jesus knew His Father loved Him. He believed His Father's words at His baptism, *This is My beloved Son* (Matthew 3:17), and again on the Mount of Transfiguration, *This is My beloved Son* (Matthew 17:5).

As a man, Jesus shared His Father's love with the world. He said, *As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love* (John 15:9). He said, *I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them* (John 17:26). Jesus loved us with the love He knew from His Father.

The Son of Man was not the source of the love; He was a channel for it. The Father manifested His love for us through His Son. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . .* (John 3:16).

The final test of Jesus' love-relationship with His Father came in the Garden of Gethsemane. On the night before His betrayal, Jesus was greatly distressed. *"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Stay here and watch with Me."* He went a little further and fell on His face, and prayed saying, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will"* (Matthew 26:38-39).

Three times Jesus prayed, giving up His *will* and asking for the Father's *will* to be done. Although it required death—although it didn't seem good—He surrendered the desires of His soul and trusted in His Father. The love that Jesus knew in His Spirit-to-spirit relationship with His Father thus filled and defined His soul and poured out of His broken body to the world. In this way, the Son of Man surrendered His soul-life and became a spirit-soul-body channel carrying God's will—God's love—to the world.

This surrender ushered in the New Covenant. *[When] He said, "Behold I have come to do Your will, O God," He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all* (Hebrews 10:9-10).

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus regained what Adam had lost in the Garden of Eden. Jesus gave up His soul-life to give us His Spirit-life. *The first man Adam became a living being [soul]. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit* (1 Corinthians 15:45). In dying to the desires of His soul, Jesus conquered sin and death which reigned on earth through Adam's sin nature. By the complete surrender of His will, Jesus became head of a new race. All of that race are born into the New Covenant. . . .

Questions:

What did the Father say to His Son?

As the Son of Man, how did Jesus live His life on earth?

If God said to you, "This is my beloved son/daughter," how would you respond?

How firm is your belief that God loves you?

## NEW COVENANT: FAITH PROMISES

Jesus didn't just show us a new way; He made it possible for us to live in that new way. He gave us the New Covenant to replace the Old. We can obey the two commands of the New Covenant because our obedience to them does not depend upon the work of our independent soul; the only requirement is that we believe in the finished work of Christ.

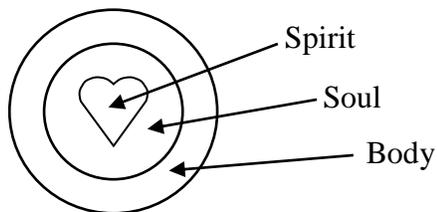
The New Covenant speaks, not of what we should do, but of what Jesus has done—by making a way for us to live in relationship with God who changes us from the inside out. The Old Covenant has nothing to give. It demands and demands and demands. The New Covenant gives and gives and gives. It pleads for us to take freely.

We take by faith. It is a two-step process laid out clearly in the two commands of the New Covenant. *And this is His commandment: that we should [1] believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and [2] love one another, as He gave us commandment* (1 John 3:23). We (1) believe that Jesus is the Son of God and we (2) love as Jesus commanded.

The first command of the New Covenant—the first step in restoring relationship with God—is to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. Scripture repeats the first commandment with its promises over and over again. John 3:16 says, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes in Him** should not perish but have **everlasting life***. John 3:36 says, *He who **believes in the Son** has **everlasting life***. John 6:40 says, *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and **believes in Him** may have **everlasting life***.

When we believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for us, our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. When we die, we will go to heaven. No “good” works are required of the independent soul. We simply accept the truth in faith. Salvation is a free gift. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our spirit and we are born again. In this way, our spirit fulfills its God-intended purpose; it connects us to God and is a resting place for Him.

Figure 2 shows the state of one who is saved. The spirit is filled with God's Spirit.



Yet, salvation by faith in Jesus as the Son of God isn't all that God intends for us. We were made for more than eternal life. We were also created to live rightly on earth. The finished work of Christ includes more than just a born-again spirit. The soul also needs to be renewed. . . .

Questions:

What is the first command of the New Covenant?

What are the promises that come with obedience to that command?

What happens to the spirit when one believes in Jesus?

Do you have assurance of everlasting life?

## NEW COVENANT: LOVE PROMISES

As stated in the last chapter, the New Covenant includes two commands. *And this is His commandment: that we should [1] believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and [2] love one another, as He gave us commandment* (1 John 3:23). Throughout the New Testament we are repeatedly reminded of the importance of faith *and* love.

Faith alone isn't enough. Scripture tells us, *Faith without works is dead* (James 2:20), and *Faith work[s] through love* (Galatians 5:6). But what are these loving works? How do they come about?

How did Jesus command us to love one another? It certainly isn't by loving God and our neighbor as spelled out in the Old Covenant. Even with God in our spirit by faith, the Law is impossible to obey. Just because we have a born-again spirit does not mean our soul surrenders its independent ways.

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of *the new covenant in My blood* (1 Corinthians 11:25). On that same night, He also gave His New Commandment. *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). Later in the evening, Jesus repeated His command. *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you* (John 15:12).

Wow! When I first heard this truth in May of 2007, I knew it was God's deep solution to my problem of not loving.<sup>1</sup> It was the vital, missing piece of how God designed us to love—by sharing His love with others.

Yes! Now loving is possible . . . because it doesn't depend on the independent soul. We aren't the source of the love. It is not about trying to love God with *all your heart, all your soul and all your mind* as the Law demands. It is about receiving the love Jesus has for us; it is about believing that He loves us.

The two greatest commands in the Old Covenant and Jesus' New Command all have to do with love. But there are vast differences between the Old and New. Jesus' command tells us of a love that we don't have to work for. God's love for me is not conditional upon my performance nor my obedience. I don't earn God's love by *doing* good things. He loves me because He made me a human *being*.

Under the Old Covenant, the independent soul is responsible for the impossible task of generating love for God and others. In the New Covenant we love with the love God first gave to us. John writes, *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (1 John 4:10). *We love Him because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19).

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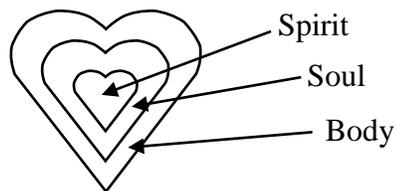
<sup>1</sup> Gaylord Enns, "Love Revolution: Finding the Lost Command of Jesus" use the web address to be set up through JesusOnline.

In the New Covenant, love starts with God. *The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us* (Romans 5:5). God pours His love into our hearts (spirit and soul together) so that we can share it with the world. We are meant to be channels for His love. His love flows through us—through our spirit, soul and body.

In God's design, His love pours into our soul in one form, but it pours out from our soul in another. The love He pours into our soul from our Spirit-to-spirit relationship does not have a form the world can understand. But when it passes through our soul, that love takes on a physical form. It becomes a servant. It washes dirty feet. It feeds the poor and visits the sick. Mankind can understand the language of a love that died on a cross for us.

The soul was created to be loved and to pass that love along to others. When we come to know and believe in Jesus' love for us, our soul surrenders to the spirit's leading and we come to live life on earth as God intends. Our souls are renewed as God's nature floods our mind, will and emotions. In relationship with God—as His love flows through us—we come to be the people He created us to be. Spirit, soul and body are aligned with God.

Figure 3 shows the state of one who believes in Jesus as the Son of God *and* who has come to know God's love. The spirit is filled with God, the soul knows His love, and the body expresses that to the world.



After that day at Edna's in 2004 and the understanding of John 13:34 in 2007, I began to see what Scripture was repeating over and over. Somehow, through the ongoing trials of life, I began to know God's love for me in deeper and deeper ways. And as this happened, I began to see His love-promises. The second command of the New Covenant comes with amazing promises—not for up in heaven, when we die—but for down here on earth, as we live.

In John 13:34-35 Jesus says, *A new commandment I give to you, that you **love** one another; as I have loved you, that you also **love** one another. **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*** Love marks us as disciples of Christ.

*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you: abide in My **love*** (John 15:9). *He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing* (John 15:5). The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience . . . God's nature is reflected through our nature, as we live life on earth.

*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. **Love** has been perfected among us in this:*

*that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world* (1 John 4:16-17). When we know and believe the love God has for us, we come to be like Him *in this world*.

*For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:14-19). When we know the love of Christ, we shall be *filled with all the fullness of God*.

Table 1 shows the promises that come with the first and second commandments of the New Covenant.

Working to gain His love or trying to love others as rules or traditions demand, might get us to living “good” Christian lives, but they definitely will not get us to living the glorious life God promises. We were created to be filled with the nature of God so that His love flows through the spirit-soul-body channel of us to others. Jesus made a way for us to live as He did when He walked this earth in relationship with His Father.

So why aren't we living like that? . . .

Questions:

Prior to reading this booklet, what commands did you believe Jesus had given us to obey?

What is God's desire for your soul?

Imagine living life on earth *filled with all the fullness of God*. Describe that life.

**Table 1**

<b>FAITH PROMISES</b>	<b>LOVE PROMISES</b>
Come by <i>faith in Jesus as the Son of God</i>	Come by <i>knowing Jesus' love for us</i>
Defined by a <i>one-time decision</i>	Defined by a <i>continual abiding</i>
<i>Spirit</i> is born again	<i>Soul</i> is renewed
Mark the <i>beginning</i> of the Christian life	Mark the <i>fulfillment</i> of the Christian life
Work <i>backward</i> in time to cover past sins	Work <i>forward</i> in time by changing the sin nature
Result in <i>justified</i>	Result in <i>glorified</i>
Make us <i>children of God</i>	Make us <i>sons of God</i>
Grant <i>eternal life</i>	Grant <i>Christlikeness in this life</i>
Resulted in <i>The Reformation</i>	Will result in <i>transformation</i>

## PAUL’S WARNING: “O FOOLISH GALATIANS!”

Christians today understand that eternal life is not earned by works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Yet, for living life on earth and loving others, we keep trying, with God’s help, to do our best. Despite having a born-again spirit, our independent soul keeps trying to do something “good” to live rightly on earth. Adam’s sin nature has a deep-rooted hold.

Satan fights to keep us from being born-again. But once we have God’s Spirit in us, his tactic is to keep the Spirit bottled up inside our spirit so it cannot express itself to the world. For us Christians, Satan works his evil in the name of God. He masquerades as an angel of light bombarding us with “good” things for the independent soul to do after receiving Christ by faith. The Father of Lies has deceived us into thinking that after we are born again, we can somehow—by following some set of New Testament rules or “good” advice—reach our God-intended destiny for life on earth.

THAT IS A LIE.

Paul confronted Peter for teaching similar falsehood. When Peter was teaching faith in Jesus *and* obedience to Jewish laws and traditions, Paul *withstood him to his face* (Galatians 2:11). Paul did not want Christians sinking back under the burden of the Law. Any mix of faith and flesh—any combination of grace and Law—is toxic and cannot produce life as God designed. Jesus did not begin a good work and then leave it to Moses to finish.

In strong words Paul warned the believers in Galatia: *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, . . . Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?* (Galatians 3:1-3). The believers in Galatia had begun well; they were born of the *Spirit*. But now they were attempting to live their Christian lives in the *flesh*—by the strength of the independent soul.

The term *flesh* refers to the two parts of soul and body together. Just as the heart is the spirit and soul together, the flesh is the soul and body together. The flesh is neither sinful nor righteous. It is made sinful or righteous depending upon who leads it.

When the flesh controls itself—when the soul is master—it is sinful. Although it may look good on the outside (such as when it does good and avoids evil), the flesh, cut off from God, cannot produce life as God intends. At its “best” the flesh is a Pharisee in the temple; at its “worst” it is an unrepentant murderer in prison. Paul says, *In me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find* (Romans 7:18).

But, when the Spirit is Master, the flesh radiates the nature of God—the glory of God. Through the flesh of man, we get a picture of God we can understand. Speaking of the

Son of Man, Scripture says, *And the Word became **flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory* (John 1:14). Paul speaks of the life of Jesus being *manifested in our mortal **flesh*** (2 Corinthians 4:11). When God’s Spirit through our spirit leads, we operate *in the Spirit* and radiate God (Who is love) to the world.

Paul continued speaking to the Galatians. *If we **live** in the Spirit, let us also **walk** in the Spirit* (Galatians 5:25). To *live* in the Spirit and to *walk* in the Spirit are two different things. The first happens at the moment of salvation. When we *live* in the Spirit, we are born of the Spirit and become *children of God*. Romans 8:16 says, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are **children of God***.

The second happens in continual love-relationship with God as we *walk* out this life on earth. We walk in the Spirit by living our lives guided by God. The soul gives up its own will and surrenders to the spirit. When we let God lead, we become mature *sons of God*. Romans 8:14 says, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God***.

But how does one become a son/daughter of God who is continually led by the Spirit? If choosing to walk in the Spirit is something I must do, then I have put myself back under the Law. If I make walking in the Spirit (or loving others) a rule, I am under the impossibility of the Old Covenant. Even if I am born-again in my spirit, my independent soul won’t be able to consistently yield to the Spirit. *With men this is impossible, . . .*

*But with God all things are possible* (Matthew 19:26). God has done it. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God isn’t enough. But faith in Jesus as the Son of God *and* knowing (by faith) that Jesus loves us are. Jesus is enough; we just need to know Him as He really is—full of love for us. The Spirit is the source of the love the soul so desperately longs for. God’s love completely satisfies the soul and holds it in a position of joyful surrender to the Spirit.

Earlier in Galatians, Paul put it this way. *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*** (Galatians 2:20). Paul is living life on earth, not just by *faith in the Son of God*, but by *faith in the Son of God, who loved me*. Obedience to both New Covenant Commands—the faith command *and* the love command—brings life according to God’s design.

But sadly the deception didn’t end with Paul’s warning to Peter or the Galatians. Throughout the centuries, up to the present day, Christians have continued to try and live life on earth by some toxic mix of faith and flesh. . . .

Questions:

What did Paul warn Peter and the Galatians about?

Contrast the meaning of *in the flesh* and *in the Spirit*.

How is it possible to be saved, yet still walk in the flesh?

In what ways might you be using “good” rules to guide your life?

## FROM REFORMATION TO TRANSFORMATION

Much as Paul stood against those who mixed faith and flesh 2000 years ago, Martin Luther stood against the Medieval Catholic Church 500 years ago. In October of 1517, Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, setting off what we know today as “The Reformation.” The Catholic monk stood on the truths of Scriptures such as *The just shall live by faith* (Romans 1:17) and *A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ* (Galatians 2:16).

It wasn't that the Catholic Church of Luther's day didn't believe in God's grace. They believed in a mix of grace and works for entrance into heaven. They believed that God gave His grace to those who obeyed traditions and rules. They taught that by doing things, such as being baptized and going to Mass and confession, a person received God's grace. Thus by continued works, accompanied by continued grace on God's part, a person became more and more righteous, eventually (after a stay in purgatory), meriting eternal life. A common saying of the day was, “God will not deny grace to those who do their best.” But, how could you be sure you had done your best?

Luther grew up under the dilemma created by this mixed-up thinking. Even as a pious monk, he felt he could never do enough to earn God's grace for salvation. To further intensify his dilemma, death was a daily reality in medieval Europe. Plagues, famines and wars took the lives of many. Luther was surrounded by death, yet had no assurance of heaven.

What God showed Luther in the Scriptures gave him, and all believers thereafter, assurance of eternal salvation. The monk clearly saw that going to heaven when we die came by faith in Jesus as the Son of God; works are completely unnecessary—and, in fact, prevent faith. The freedom of this Reformation-truth echoed throughout Europe—and the Christian world. Eternal life is a free gift; we are 100% justified by faith.

Luther knew that he was justified by *faith* alone. Yet he also saw the Scripture's emphasis on *love*. He saw that the two greatest commandments of the Old Covenant had to do with love. Yet, Luther knew that the Law, which demanded love, was impossible to obey. He wrote, “The words, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God,’ require perfect obedience, perfect fear, perfect trust, and perfect love. But where are the people who can render perfection? Hence, this commandment, instead of justifying men, only accuses and condemns them.”<sup>2</sup>

Luther faced a second dilemma. Whereas his first dilemma had involved eternal life, his second involved life on earth. How was he supposed to love God and others?

Luther saw that love was required, but didn't see Jesus' New Covenant love. Therefore, he tried what he knew to be impossible. He treated love as a work to be done under the Law—by the independent soul. After teaching faith for eternal life, Luther taught works

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther “Commentary on Galatians,” (Zondervan, 2017), p.119.

for loving God and our neighbor. He wrote, “Since you have found Christ by faith, . . . begin now to work and do well. Love God and your neighbor.”<sup>3</sup>

By making love a work, Luther fell back into the mixed-up thinking of the Medieval Catholic Church. For living a life of love, he believed in a toxic mix of God’s grace and man’s works. Under this lie, loving is impossible; living life on earth as God designed is impossible.

Critically tied to this deception, Luther believed man to be of only two parts—an inner man and an outer man or “body.” Under Luther’s thinking, a picture of man would have depicted a heart (representing the saved inner man) surrounded by *one* outer circle (representing the body). Luther viewed faith as for the inner man; a hidden faith justified the hidden inner man leading to eternal life. And he viewed works as necessary to bring the body into conformity to the hidden faith within.

Because Luther was unaware of the soul and didn’t understand that we express through our body only that which is known to the mind, will and emotions, he tried to force his body into being “good” and “loving.” He wrote, “Although . . . a man is abundantly and sufficiently justified by faith inwardly, in his spirit, . . . yet he remains in this mortal life on earth. In this life he must control his own body. . . Here the work begins; here a man cannot enjoy leisure; here he must indeed take care to discipline his body by fastings, watchings, labors and other reasonable discipline . . .”<sup>4</sup>

To live a life pleasing to God this side of heaven, Luther fell back into the deception held by the Medieval Catholic Church—into the deception Paul warned about—into the deception inherent in the fallen nature of Adam—into the deception Satan perpetuates to this day. The monk taught that right living on earth—loving God and others—was to be attained by some mix of faith and works of the flesh.

Luther understood the first command of the New Covenant: to believe in Jesus. But he failed to see the second: to love one another as He first loved us. Luther didn’t see Jesus’ New Command: *Love one another as I have loved you* (John 15:12). He missed the *as I have loved you*. He viewed love as a work to be done under the Old Covenant, not as a gift to be received under the New.

Luther’s belief system was incomplete. He lived with the foot of faith firmly planted in the New Covenant, but the foot of love still caught in the Old. And so, like a man with only one foot, he hobbled through life. That something was wrong with Luther’s thinking should have been horribly clear when the Nazis used his writings to justify the slaughter of six million Jews.

Yet today, in 2017, the Church believes in large part, like Luther believed 500 years ago. We know that we are saved by faith in Jesus as the Son of God. But we also wrongly believe that to live as God designed on earth, we must work along with God’s grace.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, “Three Treatises,” (Fortress Press, 1970), p. 294.

Today we may be taught that going to church helps. Prayer helps. Fellowship with others helps. Reading the Bible helps. Being “filled with the Spirit” helps.

It is true that these things nourish the soul, but if we try to do them on our own they become nothing but impossible, pride-producing works of the Law. In right relationship with God, these things come naturally; *doing* right flows from *being* right—in relationship with God.

The deception runs deep. An incomplete belief system, with its toxic mix of grace and works, dictates how we live our Christian lives. And so we (1) struggle to meet the standards set by that belief system. We (2) fabricate a “good” life that can be attained by conformity to those standards (and then become prideful, like the Pharisees, if we reach it). We (3) live in “hope” (which is really defeat) thinking it is impossible to live and love as God planned, but waiting for death to reach God’s design for us. Under this way of thinking, life is a sort of purgatory on earth—a place we must pass through for the transformation awaiting us in heaven.

But Scripture promises so much more. Romans 12:2 says, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* When our mind (soul) is renewed we will be *transformed* and express on earth, the *good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Through belief in the truth taught in The Reformation our spirits are reborn. But now is the time for the renewal of our mind, will and emotions—the restoration of our souls. Now is the time for us to believe that God loves us and let that *transform* us as His loving nature pours out of us to others.

Glory awaits. . . .

Questions:

What fundamental truths of Scripture did Luther see?

What fundamental truths of Scripture did Luther miss?

How has Luther’s understanding impacted the Church today?

How has Luther’s understanding impacted your thinking and the way you live your life?

## GLORIFIED: DWELLING IN LOVE

Luther understood that we are *justified* by Christ alone. A justified person knows that his sins are forgiven and eternal life is his. We in Christianity today understand that truth. But, we do not understand that we are also *glorified* by Christ alone.

Romans 8:29-30 says, *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also **justified**; and whom He justified, these He also **glorified**.* We are meant to be like His Son; for this reason **He predestined, He called, He justified and He glorified.** Flesh has no part to play. God did it all!

What does it mean to be glorified? On Mount Sinai, Moses asked God, *Please, show me Your **glory**.* And God replied, *I will make all my **goodness** pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. . . . So it shall be, while My **glory** passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand* (Exodus 33:18-22). God showed Moses His *glory*—by letting the man see His *goodness*. God's glory is His goodness. God's glory is His nature.

God shares His glory with us by sharing His loving nature with us. Jesus prayed, *And the glory which You gave Me I have given to them, . . . that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me* (John 17:22-23). We are glorified in relationship with God. A glorified person reflects the image of Christ. Jesus' nature—His love—radiates out of her and she lives life as God intends.

Something glorious is coming. What God longs to share with us today is much greater than the fading glory He shared with Moses (see 2 Corinthians 3:7-11). Paul spoke of *Christ in you, the **hope of glory*** (Colossians 1:27). Christ *in us* is the *hope of glory*.

If we have “accepted Jesus into our heart,” we are saved and God lives *in* our spirit. But He doesn't just want to live *in* (and bring His life to) our spirit. He wants to have access to the whole of our heart (the spirit and soul together). God doesn't want to stay locked up *in* our spirit. He wants to  *dwell in* (and bring His life to) our soul as well.

It is the contents of our soul that the world sees. When others see us do they sense our love for them, our peace and joy? Or do they sense our displeasure toward them, our anxiety or depression? When God  *dwells in* our soul, the world will see Jesus through us. God designed the whole of our earthly temples—spirit, soul and body—to be fully His so that we become  *partakers of the divine nature* (2 Peter 1:4) and radiate the glory of God.

As partakers of His nature, we bear much fruit (see John 15:4-8). We don't try to make ourselves right by following rules or traditions. Working hard to clothes ourselves in

“good” deeds (like loving others) doesn’t make us right. Even the *gifts of the Spirit* don’t make us right.

Rather, we come to look right on the outside because we are right on the inside. In love-relationship with God, we actually become the people we have tried to fit the description of. The *fruit of the Spirit* comes naturally from a branch grafted to the vine. Obedience to the Law comes naturally. Walking in the Spirit—with the soul surrendered to the will of God—comes naturally.

In abiding relationship, our soul ceases its independent work and finds rest under the leading of the Spirit. *For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His* (Hebrews 4:10). We don’t do our own work—generated by the efforts of the independent soul. Rather, God accomplishes His loving work through us; He leads us in the *good works [He] prepared beforehand that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10).

Our only work is to believe in the finished work of Christ so He can bring His life through us. When the crowds came to Jesus with the question, *What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*, His reply was, *This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent* (John 6:28-29).

A glorious time is dawning. The Old Testament speaks of three main feasts—Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.<sup>5</sup> The Church has seen the spiritual fulfillment of Passover and Pentecost. But we have not yet experienced the spiritual fulfillment of Tabernacles—the greatest of the three feasts. In the Old Testament, the Feast of Tabernacles was known as the feast of the fruit harvest, the feast of rest and the feast of glory.

It was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus stood and cried out, *If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*” (John 7:37-38). In the spiritual fulfillment of Tabernacles, rivers of living water will flow from our hearts. We will be the channels through which His life-giving water flows.

The writers of the New Testament knew that something surpassing the greatness of their time was coming.

John wrote, *Beloved, now we are **children of God**; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is* (1 John 3:2). In this generation God is being revealed as who He really is—as the God of love. And we shall be like Him.

Paul said, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the **sons of God*** (Romans 8: 18-19). Creation

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<sup>5</sup> George Warnock, “The Feast of Tabernacles: The Hope of the Church,” [www.georgewarnock.com/feast-main.html](http://www.georgewarnock.com/feast-main.html) (accessed Oct 18, 2013).

has been eagerly waiting. God's glory—His nature of love—will be revealed through us as sons and daughters of God.

Now is the time for transformation. . . .

Questions:

What is God's glory?

How does God share His glory with us?

Choose to see someone you know as glorified on earth. Describe what you see.

Imagine yourself bursting with God's love. Describe your life on earth as a glorified human being.

## ONWARD BELOVED!

Up until that August day at Edna's in 2004, I'd stayed busy, living my version of a "good" Christian life by trying to love God and others. I'd lived this way because deep down in my soul, I thought I had to earn God's love by doing "good" things. I thought I didn't deserve God's love and therefore needed to work for it. That lie went so deep that I interpreted all of Scripture through its distorted lens, so that even God's word, meant to bring freedom, held me in bondage.

I raised our four children in bondage to that lie. Because I didn't know that God really loved me, I didn't have that love to share with them. They grew up going to church but not knowing the unconditional love of parents—which serves as a foundation for receiving the love of God. Oh the pain what has come through me has caused.

Scripture says, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge* (Hosea 4:6). Before we can believe, we need *knowledge* of what to believe in. Believe is a big word, because God is a big God. I want to believe in God as He really is—full of love for us.

It has taken time, but now I can better understand and accept His words, "Mary, I love you." And with acceptance of His love for me came the understanding recorded in these pages. Now I can more clearly see His promises to us—HIS BELOVED.

If only I had known then what I know now. God doesn't love us because we are good; He makes us good because He loves us. His love makes us good—as He created us to be. God made our hearts with holes that can only be filled with His love for us. Our souls long to understand the words, "I LOVE YOU." Knowing the truth of these words brings life as God intends—transformation.

As Jesus hung on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn in two. The veil that separated the Holy of Holies (which represents the Spirit) and the Inner Court (which represents the soul) was torn from top to bottom; mankind was allowed full access to God *and* God was allowed full access to mankind. The wall of division between Spirit and soul has been destroyed. God, in our spirit, has full access to our soul.

Our souls need that access . . . because our souls were designed to know God's love for us. God created us to be led by the Spirit—with our souls in willing surrender to the love of God. In God's design, like a pair of magnets, Spirit and soul are drawn and locked together in the life-giving love of God.

When led by the Spirit, the soul rests from its works. In that rest of abiding love, we become our true selves. We become God's channel to the world. We bear His image. We express His nature. We radiate His glory. We carry His love to earth. We express God's heavenly, spiritual love for us by loving others in earthly, physical ways—as Jesus did.

Jesus taught us to pray, *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10). God's *will* comes to earth when we let it find a resting place in our mind,

will and emotions—in our soul. We rule on earth, as Adam was created to, by letting God in our spirit dwell in and be Master of our soul. God’s will—His glory—His nature of love—comes to this world through us.

As He shares His loving nature with us, His glory will be over all the earth. Isaiah 60:1-3 encourages us. *Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth. And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you. And His glory will be seen upon you.*

Oh that we might fully believe in His love for us. Satan opposes us in horrible ways to try and shake us from this truth. We battle almost overwhelming waves of unbelief. Most of Christianity does not believe in this extent of Jesus’ love for us. They do not see the vastness of what His love promises. They do not see that *love [really] is the fulfillment of the law* (Romans 13:10). To step out of the box of the incomplete Christian belief system of today requires a paradigm shift of monumental proportions.

Five hundred years ago, Luther fought similar battles as he came out of the mixed-up belief system of the Medieval Catholic Church and stood firm on the truths of faith. The way of faith is clear to us in Christianity today because those in Luther’s time blazed a trail.

Now, in this generation, God is raising up a people to make clear the way of love. We hold up the word of God, stand firm in faith and walk out a life of love. We embrace His love and share it with others. We become living proof of His transforming love. Multitudes will follow when we, as fishers of men in keeping with Jesus’ call, cast our nets on the other side (see John 21:6) and fish for souls in this new way.

In God’s love, victory is assured. *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us* (Romans 8:37). Nothing can hold us back because nothing can separate us from His love that makes it all possible. *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 8:38-39).

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it* (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

**ONWARD BELOVED!**

(small picture of three heart design again)