

**Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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Detroit, Michigan 48208
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“The Never Alone Church”¹

Lesson 12: “Experiencing Great Commandment Love in Your Family of Origin”

Goal: *To become the “The Never Alone Church” by practicing the Great Commandment of Love with our community of believers. This will enable us to fulfill the mandate given in the Great Commission.*

Objective: **To understand God’s plan for you to experience the Great Commandment love with your family of origin.**

Introduction:

Does your relationship with your family of origin provide the love, joys, and fellowships that fulfill God’s plan for your marriage, family and closest friends? Have disappointments and past hurts caused you to become guarded and skeptical in opening your heart to your spouse and family and closest friends? Are you unwilling to accept less in your marriage and relationships with others than what God intended for you to experience?

It is natural to guard against getting hurt again; however it may cause you to limit or miss out on the love and fellowship relationships God intends for you to experience. God knows that everyone’s life has been subject to disappointments, unexpected and painful experiences inflicted by parents, siblings, relatives and friends. He also knows that no one wants to relive painful experiences. Jesus invites us to experience His Great Commandment love through His Word and the life He modeled.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. –1 John 4:16 -19 KJV

Jesus embodied the fullest extent of God’s love for us and it was for our salvation. It is God’s will for us to serve Him by trusting Him enough to open our hearts to experience the power of Great Commandment love with one another, especially the people in your family of origin.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not onto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths.” –Proverbs 3:5,6 KJV

¹ Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998

Discussion Point #1: Leave and Cleave: *Are you willing to take the first step in overcoming differences and any barrier to experiencing God's Great Commandment love with your spouse and also members of your family of origin?*

Who is our family of origin? Our family of origin primarily consists of our parents, siblings and closest friends. Some of us may have shared close relationships with our parents and siblings who may be a stumbling block to the relationship we should experience with our spouse. We must evaluate the impact of our familiar relationships and determine if there is anything that interferes with meeting our marital relational needs. God intends for our marital relational needs to be met through our spouse. Married couples should physically, emotionally and spiritually leave their parents to unite and become one flesh.² Only then can they experience the oneness and intimacy of a healthy marriage. (Gen. 2:24)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. – Gen. 2:24 NKJV

Discussion Point #2: Unconditional Sharing: *Consider those in your family of origin who may have been the cause of your pain and past hurts. Are you willing to embrace a genuine forgiveness that Jesus taught and let them know how much you desire to express the love you feel for them?*

“Love enough to forgive. God wants us to forgive so we can put away our anger and experience the full healing that comes from his comfort.³ Start by acknowledging the depths of your love and relationship with God. As vessels of God's love, we are first confident in His purpose to express our love to others, as God has loved us.

“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. –Luke 6:32-36 NKJV

Discussion Point #3: Dealing with Past Hurts: *What is God's desire for our family of origin as we grow in relationship with Him? Have you ever caused anyone pain and disappointment that is similar to what you have experienced by others?*

“In one sense, forgiveness completes the emotional healing process. Forgiveness is a beautiful gift from the God who has our best interest at heart.⁴ We, who have accepted the Lord Jesus are called to be His light in this dark world. We must be willing to forgive and live our lives as His

² Ibid, 165

³ Ibid, 177

⁴ Ibid, 176

ambassadors. We *walk in the newness of life* through our relationship with God; this is what enables us to have a greater capacity to love, and forgive. In doing so, God is glorified.

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. –Luke 9:23 NKJV

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. –Matthew 5:16

Biblical Exercise: As you consider your family of origin, prayerfully select a person and include your spouse to establish the level of relationship that fulfills God's desire for you to experience with them. Share pleasant and unpleasant memories from either your childhood or adult life. Offer words of understanding, compassion, and support where needed. Consider ways you may be still looking inappropriately for mother, dad, or another family member to meet some key needs such as encouragement, acceptance, respect, attention, comfort, approval, etc. Pray together with your partner and then ask God to bless and bring healing in these areas of relationship.⁵

⁵ Ibid, 182-185

The Great Commandment of Love:

“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]

The Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age. [Matthew 28:19-20, NKJV]

Monthly Biblical Exercises

December, 09 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Forgiveness*

January, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Relevance for ‘The Never Alone Church*

February, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *People Need God and One Another*

March, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Responding to Vital Relational Needs*

April, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Meeting Needs of Others with Scripture*

May, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering to Fallenness and Aloneness*

June, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately*

October, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately #2*

November, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Where Great Commandment Love Begins*

December, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *God’s Priority for Ministry*

January, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love/Your Jerusalem*

February, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love w/Family of Origin*