

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

**Lesson 4: Great Commandment Love Identifies Needs**

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

**Objective:** To be a church that demonstrates the Love of God through the Great Commandment of love, by identifying and meeting the *valid relational needs* of others:

**A valid need is one that God has met in our lives and admonishes us to meet in the lives of others through the expression of His Great Commandment of love.<sup>1</sup> David Ferguson, the author of, *The Never Alone Church*, identifies valid needs in connection to those in Scripture that God attended to and admonished followers of Christ to do as specified in His Word.<sup>2</sup> For example, the need for acceptance is identified and addressed in Romans 15:7. “Accept one another as Christ has accepted you.”**

God, our creator knows His creation. He knows exactly what we need at all times. He certainly is able to provide for us, especially through others. Twenty-four times in the New Testament, believers are instructed to “Greet one another.” The word “greet” means more than just saying hello. It relates to deeply knowing and expressing caring concern. Since we are urged to express care to one another, we *must* have a need for this kind of care. In the scriptures God seems to be saying, “Just as my Son took the initiative to enter into your world, to know you deeply, and to care for you with loving concern, you must do the same for your friends and the friendless.<sup>3</sup>

According to Gene Getz, some churches give primary concern to how well the Bible is taught. He goes on to say that if love is the greatest concept in the world and if it is to be the primary concern of a local body of believers, then how is the average church measuring up to it?<sup>4</sup> Paul said in his letter to the Thessalonians:

*“Now, brotherly love, we do not need to write to you about, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.....Yet, we urge you brothers*

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<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1998, 44

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 43

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 44

<sup>4</sup> Getz, *The Measure of a Church*, Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1975, 29

to do so, more and more”. [I Thessalonians 4: 9-10, NIV].

Within the body of this lesson, there is an a chart that summarizes ten vital relational needs of humankind that pertain to the body of Christ, along with Scriptural references as delineated by David Ferguson and adapted for the purposes of the lesson. When these needs go unmet some negative results are manifested. Become familiar with these areas and begin to find ways to address various relational needs within the family and the body of Christ. In the last column, there are some examples of ways these needs can be met. Discuss with your Deacon’s Group some alternatives. More on meeting God created needs in others through the Great Commandment of Love will be discussed in next month’s Deacon’s lesson.

***Discussion Point:*** How does meeting the *vital relationship needs* of others, according to God’s Word, fulfill the Biblical purpose given in the Great Commandment love? [Matthew 22: 37-40]

Consider the “one another passages” of the New Testament, for example: accept one another, (Romans 15:7), encourage one another, (1 Thessalonians 5:11), be affectionate to one another, (Romans 12:10), bear one another’s burden, (Galatians 6:2), and so on. Each reveals an area of human *relational need* where God’s Great Commandment of love may be applied in practical caring ways.<sup>5</sup>

What valid needs has God met in your lives? How can we serve as God’s instruments to meet the *valid relational needs* of others through the Great Commandment of Love?

***Biblical Exercise:*** Experience the Lord’s blessings by sharing how someone expressed the Great Commandment love to help you through a *vital relational need*.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 45

***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***

# Ten Vital Relational Needs<sup>1</sup>

Ten Vital Relational Needs	Scripture	Result of Needs Unmet	Examples of Meeting Needs
<b>Comfort:</b> Giving strength and hope; easing the grief or pain; hurting with; consoling	The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)	Failure to receive comfort for emotional hurts can hinder inner healing and spiritual growth.	Call them, listen to them, and pray with them.
<b>Attention (Care):</b> taking thought of another and conveying appropriate interest and concern; entering another's world	The members [of the body] should have the same care for one another. (1 Corinthians 12:25, NASB)	Failure to receive attention one may lose their sense of being important to others.	Remember to ask about their concerns with a prayerful intent and expression of love. Take time to see how they are doing.
<b>Acceptance:</b> deliberate and ready reception with a favorable response; receiving willingly; regarding as good and proper	Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)	Failure to receive acceptance causes an inability to understand one's worth in the Father's eyes.	Take time to acknowledge the person.
<b>Appreciation:</b> recognizing with gratitude; communicating with words and gestures personal gratefulness for another person; praising	I praise you. (1 Corinthians 11:2)	When people are not properly appreciated, they may struggle with feelings of insignificance.	Freely express your gratitude for both small and great things.
<b>Support:</b> Coming alongside and gently helping to carry a problem or struggle; assisting; providing for	Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)	When people do not receive our support, they may feel overwhelmed and hopeless.	Take time to listen to the brother or sister. Help them find appropriate resources.
<b>Encouragement:</b> urging forward and positively persuading toward a goal; inspiring with courage, spirit, or hope; stimulating	Therefore encourage one another and build each other up. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)	When people are not encouraged, they may grow weary and give up.	Express positive words of encouragement
<b>Affection:</b> communicating care and closeness through physical touch and affirming words	Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives. (1 Thessalonians 2:8 NASB)	When people do not receive sufficient affection, they may feel unloved and unlovable.	Smile and show forth kindness and a warm hello
<b>Respect:</b> valuing and regarding highly; conveying great worth; esteeming; honoring	Show proper respect to everyone. (1 Peter 2:17)	When people do not receive our respect, they may feel ignored and unimportant.	Treat others courteously.
<b>Security:</b> freedom from harm, danger, and fear; putting beyond hazard of losing, want, or deprivation; confidence in relationships	Perfect love drives out fear. (1 John 4:18)	When people do not sense security in a relationship, they may be paralyzed by fear and distrust.	Help them to know that they are important and that God is their great protector.
<b>Approval:</b> affirming as satisfactory; giving formal sanction to; expressing a favorable opinion; approving of	Anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. (Romans 14:18)	When people do not receive our approval, their sense of value may be diminished.	Give favorable affirmations to the things that are in line with the Word of God

<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, David, The Never Alone Church, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1998, 45-52