

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

**Lesson 7: Great Commandment Love Springs from Knowing God
Intimately**

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 explain how the experience of knowing God intimately allows us to demonstrate the Great Commandment to love as Christ did.**

How deeply and intimately have you experienced God’s love for you? Do you realize the power of God’s Great Commandment of love is a both a demonstration of what we know and have experienced with God! I John 4: 7-12 tells us that the love we demonstrate is the evidence that we know and love God intimately. Jesus taught us how to fulfill our role in relationship to God. He taught us that our real demonstration of love for God is through our obedience to His commandments! *“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:15-17)*

We reveal the integrity of our love for Christ through our commitment to obey His commandments. Because of the depth and example of Christ’s sacrificial love for us on the cross, our hearts soften and turn towards the plights of others. Through God’s Holy Spirit we become more effective in relating to them. As we delve into the Word of God carefully looking at the life of Jesus, one cannot help but notice that Jesus felt the gamut and full range of emotions—compassion, grief, agony, and suffering to the point of death. Christ’s life is a clear example that intimate love and knowledge of the God’s love empowers us to live, love, obey, no matter what the cost.

“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” (John 15:4) “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full.” (John 15:10-11)

We are talking about knowing God and His Word intimately, and especially about allowing the Holy Spirit to impart His likeness and love through us to others.¹

¹ Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998, 96

These are a few of the Scriptures where Jesus emphasizes the significance of our obedience to His commandments to show forth His Spiritual love. It is the Word of God operative in our hearts and the power of the Holy Spirit within us that enables us to fulfill the Great Commandment love and the mandate to *bring forth much fruit*. This month's lesson should encourage us to examine our effectiveness in demonstrating the Great Commandment love by knowing God intimately. ***It is love for Christ, not rules and commands that motivate the Great Commandment love.***²

Discussion Point #1:

- Why does our obedience demonstrate our love for God and enables our fulfillment of the Great Commandment love and the Great Commission?
- Our obedience to God's Word demonstrates our genuine understanding and acceptance of God's grace and mercy. This ought to compel us to submit to the transformation of our lives to the image of Christ. "Walking intimately with him motivates us to righteous living and compassionate caring."³

"I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."(Romans 12:1,2)

Discussion Point #2:

- ***What does it mean to fellowship in the suffering of Christ?***
*This is in reference to a deep communion and partnership of suffering that every Christian shares with Christ who is able to comfort. He has already experience the same suffering and immeasurably more.*⁴

The suffering Christ endured is a demonstration of how much Christ gave up to redeem us. "He, who knew no sin, became sin for us!" What a great chasm Jesus had to cross to become the Savior of a sin-sick world. While we can never experience the same level of suffering, His life is an example that just as God went through the greatest length to reclaim us as his children, we ought to be willing to do whatever it takes to help others experience that same divine love. The apostle, Paul encouraged the Philippians to demonstrate God's love to the ultimate degree by examining the humility of Jesus in serving. (Phil 2: 1-8.) It is the Holy Spirit's power that allows us to endure the hardship of being a servant of God. Ministry is neither easy nor convenient! It is a humbling experience to set one's self aside for the good of another. Many of us fall short of the ability to do so, but when we do we can look to Jesus! This ought to compel us to go the extra mile to serve and love others to the point that Jesus is revealed in us!

² Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998, 105

³ Ibid,

⁴ MacArthur, John, "The MacArthur Study Bible : Word Publishing 1997

Hebrews 4:15

For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.

***Only as we grow in our love for God are we able to express his love to others.*⁵**

Biblical Exercise: Recall and share any experience in which someone ministered to you in such a way that you knew you had experienced the love of God. In what ways did the experience help you to know God more intimately and deeply? In what ways has that experience enabled you to minister to someone else?

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*

⁵ Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998, 98