

**Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church**  
**2080 West Grand Blvd.**  
**Detroit, Michigan 48208**  
**Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor**

**Lesson 7: *Lightening the Load*<sup>1</sup>**

**Goal:**            *Build Authentic Relationships by Reestablishing the Art of “One Anothering.”*

**Objective:**    *Provide Scriptural support for Lightening the Load for Others*

**Overview:**

Wayne Jacobsen in his book *Authentic Relationships* uses the expression “Lightening the Load” to speak of practical ways to help others face the demands of life.<sup>2</sup> While many Christians struggle with genuine ways to strengthen and bring new believers to Christ, at the same time people throughout our society are burdened with hardships and need to experience the love of Jesus through others to *lighten their load*. Our demonstration of *lightening the load* for others requires a *hands-on* approach. This way we represent God’s love and give comfort to people during difficult times. “*Jesus never thought it beneath him to serve people in simple and practical ways. Love will cause us to put the need of others above our own and to do so joyfully.*”<sup>3</sup>

We must be ready and willing to serve others as an expression of God’s love for us and others. Our support in *lightening the load* for others ought to reflect sincerity, as we minister to their needs. For the unsaved, our acts of kindness can help prepare them to accept the invitation offered by Jesus. Jesus has all we need. “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*” (Matthew 11:28-30 KJV)

Most greetings among Christians are the same cordial expressions of the world “Hello, how are you?” There is seldom another expression that initiates an opportunity to *lighten someone’s load*. Consider asking someone about their general day-to-day needs or state of affairs. Share something about yourself and how you were helped to engage their participation in the discussion. Be prepared to offer support if needed. There are people everywhere who need help finding employment, while others would simply appreciate an occasional ride or travel assistance, cost saving ideas or support for their children.

Everyone has needs, but not every need can be met by another person. Sometimes when people are going through challenging times they don’t always need someone to solve the problem. They may only need someone to listen and be there for them. God has blessed us to receive meaningful help from other people during difficult times. It is God’s will that we help others

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobsen, W., & Jacobsen, C. *Authentic Relationships: Discover the lost art of “one anothering”*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, (2003). Print.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 81

with burdens. Start by thinking about reciprocating the same support you received when someone *lightened your heavy load*.

*“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2 KJV)*

We should also focus on building each other up in the faith. Encourage one another in Christ that we may grow spiritually and be more intimate with Him. One of the ways we can build each other up is by sharing the Word of God and telling what God is doing in our lives. This will provide spiritual nourishment to others and deepen the fellowship.

Jesus has given His followers a mandate to bear *fruit* for our Heavenly Father. Among the fruit of the Spirit are love, kindness, patience, gentleness, and goodness. [Galatians 5: 22-23] Since, God has blessed us so that we can fulfill His will, we ought to find ways to demonstrate the fruit toward others with genuine sensitivity and compassion. **What a joy it is to serve!**

### **Discussion Point #1**

How did Jesus model His Father's will as He removed burdens or *lightened the load* when ministering to the needs of people? He modeled compassion for the blind man when He healed him according to the will of God so that the works of God would be manifested in him.

*“And his disciples asked him, saying Master, who did sin this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” (John 9:2-3 KJV)*

*“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe, that the Father is in me and I in him.” (John 10:37-38 KJV)*

### **Discussion Point #2**

What are a few ways that a person can bring relief or *lighten the load* for another person?

Consider asking another person about a way to be of help with *a burden* they are carrying. Some organizations may be contacted to provide assistance where appropriate. Sincere willingness provides an opportunity for serving, dialogue, and prayer with another person.

*“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:15-17 KJV)*

### **Discussion Point #3**

Has someone lightened your load by helping you with a burden? How did you feel? Can you share your experience as an example of how to *lightening a load* with your ministry or deacon's group? It is often said, “If you have been blessed, then you ought be a blessing to someone.

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1)*

*“Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not the high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit.” (Romans 15:15,16 KJV)*

**Biblical Exercise:**

**As you Identify, Pray, Witness and Invite (IPWI) people to experience a closer relationship with God, pray that God will reveal some way for you to help them by *lightening their load*.**

**Monthly Biblical Lessons**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Monthly Biblical Lessons</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>2011</b>	<i>Introduction to Authentic Relationships</i>
<b>November</b>	<b>2011</b>	<i>Loving Others Like God Loves You</i>
<b>December</b>	<b>2011</b>	<i>A Soft Place to Fall</i>
<b>January</b>	<b>2012</b>	<i>It's Not All About You</i>
<b>February</b>	<b>2012</b>	<i>Initial Contact</i>
<b>March</b>	<b>2012</b>	<i>Sharing God's Kindness</i>
<b>April</b>	<b>2012</b>	<i>Lightening the Load</i>