

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

Lesson 9: Where Great Commandment Love Begins

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 and experience the Great Commandment love as Jesus taught and modeled for us.**

Introduction:

God’s love is the very foundation of the Great Commandment; it empowers us to fulfill the Great Commission. Have you experienced the kind of love that embodies God’s Great Commandment? Do you know how to share that same love with others, particularly those closest to you? How can our love relationship with God empower us as ambassadors in meeting the needs of others?

The love we need in order to meet the relational needs of others comes from the heart of God. The apostle John wrote, *“God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us.”* —1 John 4:16-17 NASB. We cannot love as God loves unless we abide where that love is: in the heart of God. We can only love others as we experience the love He has for us.²

The desire to evangelize and disciple others only fulfills the basic instructions of the Great Commission Jesus gave His disciples. *...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* —Matthew 28:20. In our eagerness to obey and fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord, we are often prompted to point out another person’s sinful state. What we fail to realize is that what draws people to Christ is a love that is responsive to the human need for compassion, comfort and the human companionship. We are reminded of what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:3,4

“The God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

Effectiveness on the horizontal plane of ministry to others is dependent on the depth of ones vertical encounter with God.³ Jesus said, *And, behold, I send the promise of my*

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

² Ibid p.119

³ Ibid p.120

“Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” —Luke 24:49

If we are to be used as God’s instrument to bring others to Christ, we must realize it can only be accomplished God’s way. It is God’s love that both compels us to reach others and empowers us to become vessels of God’s holy will. Jesus emphasized the significance of His love relationship with the Father.

“Verily, verily I say unto you. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” —John 5:19 KJV

Discussion Point #1: God is equally concerned about our human fallenness and our aloneness.⁴

Why is ministry ineffective when we are out of touch with God’s Heart?

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that knowledge of scripture is sufficient enough to bring others to Christ. Jesus anticipated this assumption as He taught His disciples that no man can come unto Christ unless the Father draws him. (John 6:44) We must pray that others will respond to the call of the Lord. The love of God is a compelling force in the lives of people: think back to your own conversion experience. It may have been in hearing the Word of God which brought conviction and your initial response. It may have been in the realization of God’s love through His Son’s death on a cross for your salvation. A love that sacrificed the life of His only begotten Son, indeed, is a convicting experience. It get’s our attention! We are challenged to demonstrate God’s love if we are to be effective in ministry.

“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. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” —John 15:5-6.

Discussion Point #2: In an effort to do ministry, we may lose sight of being a channel of God’s love.⁵

How can we become more effective channels of God’s love in bringing others to Christ?

Love is the heart of the Christian witness. Love originated in God, was manifested in His Son, and must be demonstrated by His people. The only illustration of God’s Love in this age is the Church.⁶

⁴ Ibid p.116

⁵ Ibid 1998, p.117

⁶ John MacArthur Study Bible, 1997, p. 1972

It is the power of the Holy Spirit within us that enables us to extend God's love to others. Jesus told the disciples to wait to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As a result of Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection, we received the Holy Spirit at the time of our conversion. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and empower us to do God's will and that he will enable us to effectively witness to others. This is essential because we can be so easily distracted and drawn away from God's purposes into our own way of doing things.

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John 13:34,35[KJV]. "Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love. In this was manifest the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."—1 John 4:7-9

Discussion Point #3: God went to incomprehensible lengths to restore the fellowship interrupted by sin.⁷

Are we able to comprehend, demonstrate and express to others the magnitude of God's love for us? God gave us His Son to empower us to overcome barriers to sharing our salvation! Acknowledging the need for God's love to fulfill His will, forces us to set aside worldly barriers that cause us to be limited, guarded and ineffective in demonstrating that same divine love to others?

"But God commandeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us." —Roman 5:8

⁷ Ibid p,123

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*