

**Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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“Owe no man anything, but to love one another...” Part Two

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Romans 13: 8

“Pay all your debts, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that! If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill all the requirements of God's law.” (New Living Translation)

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” (King James Version)

GOAL: To understand the depth of Christ’s love and our obligation to demonstrate that same love towards each other.

OBJECTIVE:

Explore the significance of “owe no man any thing” and how it affects the ability of the Body of Christ to fulfill God’s purpose.

ESSENTIAL INSIGHT/QUESTIONS:

- What are the characteristics of a love that reflects Christ’s love for us?
- How does loving others bring us into a deeper relationship with God?

Part One in Review:

Two commandments summarize God’s laws: love God and love others. We fulfill the law when we love God and each other completely. To *owe no man except to love one* another means it extends not only to other Christians but also to nonbelievers. To owe no one anything, means primarily to show them respect and honor. As we continue in obedience to God, He allows us to progress from just “knowing” Him to sharing His love with others. (John 15:12-17) Christians should never be in debt when it comes to loving others.

The Debt of Love:

God’s love, which is demonstrated by Christ’s sacrificial death, is a debt we will always owe. We cannot repay that debt. God loved us when we were unlovely (Romans 5:8). God loved the world and sent His Son to die for us. Jesus, who was without sin, hung on the cross in our place. Our sins were laid upon Him and nailed to the cross. He shed His innocent blood,

to purge our sins and give us eternal life. We have nothing great enough to offer in return. Loving others is the only way we can pay on the debt. Since His love is infinitely greater than ours and He paid our sin debt, we are always obligated to love others.

Where does this love originate? God is love. (I John 4: 7- 8) Love characterizes His nature. Romans 5:5 states, “*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*” God implanted within our hearts His love to overflowing that we might love Him who first loved us. (Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 3:14-19, I John 4:19) God’s love initiated our salvation. (Ephesians 1:3-6, I John 3:1,) Just as God’s love has been freely given, our love should be freely extended to others. We must allow the Lord to make our love increase and abound, not only to our Christian brothers and sisters, but also to everyone. (I Thess. 3:12, Matt. 5: 44-47) Through prayer, we can ask God to help us love those who have not been easy to love.

Fulfilling the Law:

“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 you have love one to another.” (John 13:34,35)

The royal law is better translated as the sovereign law; “You shall love your neighbor as yourself...” (James 2:8, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22: 36-40). The sovereign law when coupled with the command to love God with all of our hearts, souls, and strength (Deut. 6:4-5, Matt. 22:37), summarizes all the law in the Old Testament. “Jesus subsumes man’s whole morale duty under two categories: love for God, and love for one’s neighbors.¹ “Love is the living active principle of obedience to the whole law.”² Obedience is our sincerest expression of gratitude for the price Jesus paid for our sins. Love is what the law of God requires.

It was Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden that separated man from God. For those who are redeemed, obedience begins our journey to the kind of relationship God originally desired with man. He wants to have an intimate relationship with us. Being in an intimate relationship with God means He continually lives and abides within us. Is obedience too much to ask for Christ’s sacrificial death? He gave his life as a ransom for our sins so that we might experience the life and relationship God originally planned for us?

“As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love. If you keep 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 that your joy might be full. (John 15:9-11) My commandments, ye shall abide in My love;

¹ MacArthur, John, The MacArthur Study Bible, 1992, study notes pg. 1439, Word Publishing,

² Henry, Matthew, Matthew Henry’s Commentary in One Volume, 1961 pg. 1789 Zondervan Publishing House

The Apostle Paul understood and experienced God's love in this way. Paul prays for the church at Ephesus to experience the depths of God's love when he writes, *"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us."* (Ephesians 3:19-20)

Parts One and Two: Summary/Review/Closure:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Actively seeking God and His righteousness disables Satan's ability to tempt us to lust after things. It helps us keep possessions in perspective. God becomes the center of our lives. We trust Him to provide all that we need. Trust in God is what keeps us individually and corporately as the Body of Christ. What might happen if the church, God's chosen people trusted Him completely? When we study and apply God's Word, our faith is built up so we can trust Him completely.

It is important that we keep the channels clear so nothing stands between us and our relationship with God. Being indebted to no one does two things for believers. It keeps us from being distracted from worldly cares and getting caught up with competing for things that have no eternal value. Secondly, it helps us depend on God's love and providential care. What a wonderful thing it is to be in the hands of a loving Sovereign God. Submitting fully to His will for our lives individually is what empowers the church corporately. We become overcomers who are not deceived by worldly treasures. Every commandment God gives us is designed to help us experience His love more fully. We can be filled with the abiding presence of God to the point that we become a reflection of His Divine image! The abiding presence of God within us compels us to love others. Imagine how the Body of Christ could transform a dying world if we put God first, trust Him, and show His love for everyone!

DISCUSSION/ APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Do I have enough faith to believe that God will take care of me as I commit my life to Him?

As I reflect on my life, what must I overcome to experience the kind of relationship God desires with me?

How can I encourage my church family to seek the kind of relationship God wants us to have with Him and each other?