

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

June/July 2016

“Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 1:2). Your created value and purpose is amazing! The more you realize that, the more of a blessing your life will become.

Apology: I want to apologize for the long delay in getting this issue out. I have been away on travels nearly every week from June to August. I will be travelling in September and October also, but not as much. You can expect the August/September issue very soon. Thank you for your patience.

A FRESH LOOK AT THE LAW

by Lynnford Beachy

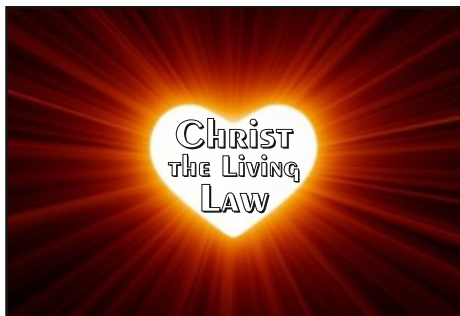
There are many types of laws, but there is one law that stands out above them all. It is the law of love, sometimes called “the Moral Law.” When Jesus was asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” He answered, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law

and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40).

These two commandments are the foundation for everything in the whole Bible. Its goal is to get us to that point. How this can be accomplished will be the main focus of this study, but first we want to get a foundation by looking at some history. Please don’t get bogged down in the history and skip the rest of the article, or else you will lose the main point which is extremely valuable.

History of Law

When man was first created is requirements were simple, “Of every



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tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16, 17). This command was an expression of the first great commandment, to love God with all the heart. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve ate the fruit, demonstrating that at that point they did not love God with all their hearts.

After man sinned, God instituted another remedial law of types and shadows illustrating how God would deal with the sin problem. If man had not sinned, this law would never have been added. This law “...was a figure for the time then present” (Hebrews 9:9) and at first it was very simple, if someone sinned, they were to offer an animal sacrifice which pointed forward to Christ’s death on the cross. Adam’s first two children, Cain and Abel participated in this law, but Cain, instead of offering an animal sacrifice, decided to do it his own way, and offered “the fruit of the ground” (Genesis 4:3). His brother offered a sacrifice as God commanded, and God showed favor to Abel’s sacrifice but not to Cain’s. This angered Cain, so he killed his brother, revealing that he did not have love in his heart.

If man had obeyed the simple laws given at first, there would not have been any need for further clarification and instruction. But man got more and more corrupt, and God added the ceremony of circumcision at Abraham’s time (about 2,000 years after creation). At this time God’s laws were simple. The Moral Law had not been written down, but they knew it was a

sin to kill, and commit adultery (Genesis 4:7-12; 39:9). The figurative law only included killing an animal as a sin offering, and circumcision.

After hundreds of years in Egypt, their worship had become more corrupt, and after God brought them out (about 2,600 years after creation), He gave them detailed instructions both about the Moral Law and the figurative law. At this time the Moral Law was clearly explained as Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God on stone (Exodus 20:3-17; 32:15, 16). This is the only part of the Bible that God wrote with His own hand. God also gave Moses further instructions clearly relating to the Moral Law, such as how we treat others and their property, explanations of adultery, theft, lying, murder, etc. All of these statutes were expansions of the original law to love God with all of our hearts, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The Figurative Law

Moses was also instructed to add minute details to the figurative law, adding statutes about priests, what they should do in the sanctuary, how and when they should kill animals, etc. All of these details are rich in meaning, but they were only designed to be temporary, they are dependent upon sin to exist. All laws that dealt with how sin was to be dealt with were only required to be performed by the Jews until the death of Christ. It was then that Christ “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Ephesians 2:15), “Blotting

out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Colossians 2:14).

There are two distinct types of laws, one moral and eternal, and the other figurative and temporary. Many try to blend these two systems, but the distinction is broad and clear. The problems with blending these two systems are twofold. Some try to blend them and claim that every law that was ever given by God must be kept forever. Others try to blend them and conclude that every law has been abolished at the cross. Yet, neither of these positions can be correct.

There is a law that is eternal, of which the Bible says, “...the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), and Jesus said, “...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). Paul wrote, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (1 Corinthians 7:19). The Book of Revelation depicts the faithful who live in the end, saying, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). This Moral Law is a transcript of God’s character. It will endure

as long as God endures. The only way to change this law is to change God, and that will never happen.

However, there is a law that is temporary, that was never designed to be kept after the cross. Of this law, the Bible says, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Hebrews 7:12). “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Hebrews 7:18). “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:9, 10).

There is a law that was weak, unprofitable, and against us, which was disannulled, changed, nailed to the cross, and abolished, but this law should never be confused with the eternal, Moral Law of God that was written by His own finger in stone.

Identifying Marks of Christians

The Bible says, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3, 4). James wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art

become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (James 2:10-12). The commandments listed here are part of the Ten Commandments, they are not the temporary, weak ones relating to how sin is dealt with. John explained, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2, 3).

Clearly, God’s Ten Commandments have not been abolished. Christians are identified by the fact that they keep them. Yet, how is that possible? Paul wrote, “But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,...” (1 Timothy 1:8, 9). There is a good way to use the law and a bad way. To use it lawfully we must remember that it was not made for a righteous man, but for sinners. This can be demonstrated by examining the speed limit laws. They were not given for people who drive carefully and responsibly, but for those who wish to drive dangerously fast. If you drive within the speed limit, the law does not affect you, but if you speed, then the law applies to you.

Using the Law Lawfully

The law is powerless to change you. The law only points out when you have broken it. It demonstrates

your need but does not fill that need. “...the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). The law teaches us our need, and brings us to Christ to get that need filled. James described it this way, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:23-25). Jesus explained, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

The law of God reveals the will of God for our lives, but should never be used to accomplish His will in us. If you read the law and say, “I must do that!” you will surely fail. This is exactly what the Jews did after hearing the law; they said, “All the words which the LORD hath said will we do” (Exodus 24:3). This was a bad promise, since they did not, and could not, do what they said they would. These promises comprised the old covenant, but Jesus came to establish a new one. “But now hath he [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been

sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Hebrews 8:6-10).

Those who participate in the new covenant have a new way of relating to the law. The Moral Law was an integral part of the Old Covenant, and it is an integral part of the new. The old way is legalism; it looks at the law and says, “I must do it, but I can’t.” The new way comes from having the law written in your heart, and put in your mind. From this standpoint we say, “God loves me so much that I can’t sin because it will hurt my relationship with God. I love God so much that I cannot bear the thought of doing anything deliberately to hurt our relationship.” These two ways of looking at the law are described by Paul when he wrote that God “...hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of

his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory” (2 Corinthians 3:6-9).

At first glance this text could be taken to mean that God’s Moral Law, written in stone, was abolished. However, that is not what was to be done away, but the “glory was to be done away.” It was the glory of that ministration that was to cease. That was the letter of the law, and it is no longer to be ministered in that way. We are pointed to the spirit of the law and the glory of that ministration which exceeds in glory. God’s Moral Law written in our hearts is much more glorious than the letter, and it is much more honorable. Having God’s law in our hearts goes way beyond what the letter of the law could ever do. Having His law in us is having Christ living in us, for He is the living law. With Christ in us we are taken places that the written law could not possibly go (Hebrews 7:19; 10:1, 11).

Christ in you enlivens and purifies every word and action. The written law says, “Do not kill,” the spirit of that law says, “God loves me so much that I love my enemies and do good to them. If they hurt me I pray for them; not to be changed so I stop hurting, but to be blessed by a revelation of God’s love so they can be saved regardless of what happens to me.” (See Matthew 5:43-48 and Acts 7:59, 60.) Jesus prayed this way for His persecutors when He said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they

do” (Luke 23:34). There was not a shred of selfishness in this prayer.

The spirit of the law goes beyond the letter and does not eliminate the literal aspect of it. In other words, when Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27, 28). Jesus did not diminish the claims of the law, but magnified them. He did not mean that you can physically commit adultery as long as you don’t think about it. No, not only will you not physically commit adultery, but with Christ in your heart you will not even think about it in your private thoughts. Don’t think that the spirit of the law allows you to break the law physically. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). You don’t have to tell a genuinely kind and loving person, “Don’t steal from, or kill, your neighbor.” Kindness will naturally come out of a kind person.

Jesus said, “...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:17-20). We often get caught up in trying to produce good fruit. We focus on the fruit, instead of the tree. If you want to live a righteous life, it will never happen if you stay focused on your actions. We can read the law and

see where we are failing, but must never try to force ourselves to obey that law. True obedience only comes from a heart that loves God.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

When you look at the Ten Commandments, they are pretty straight forward all the way through up to the last one. John was right when he said, “...his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). His Commandments are, 1) Have no other gods, 2) Do not worship idols, 3) Do not take His name in vain, 4) Remember the Sabbath day to keep in holy, 5) Honor your parents, 6) Do not kill, 7) Do not commit adultery, 8) Do not steal, 9) Do not lie, 10) Do not covet.

Everything is fairly plain and simple until you get to the last one. The last one is very interesting. It says, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:17). Think about that for a minute. To covet something is to want something you do not have. God had already said, in laws seven and eight, not to take your neighbors wife or anything that belongs to him. Now He says, don’t want them.

What if I told my children, “Don’t touch the glass of apple juice on the table.” That would be a fairly simple law to obey as well as to enforce. But what if I said, “Don’t even WANT to touch the glass of apple juice.” That is an entirely different scenario. I can ask my children not to touch something, but how can I expect them

"There is no fear in love; but perfect
love casteth out fear ... "

1 John 4:18



Elijah is Fed by Ravens

Find Nine Differences



Dear Lord,
I pray for the dog...

Love your enemies and pray for
those who persecute you
Matthew 5:44



Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Your beliefs don't make you a better person, your behavior does.

Your words mean nothing if your actions are the complete opposite.

Having true faith in what you believe must be shown through actions, believing is only half the battle.

Let your dreams be bigger than your fears, and your faith stronger than your feelings.

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will change.

-Wayne Dyer



Unscramble the New Testament Books of the Bible

WMETTAH _ _ _ _ _
MRKA _ _ _ _ _
KLEU _ _ _ _ _
HJON _ _ _ _ _
CATS _ _ _ _ _
ANSMOR _ _ _ _ _
TNSCAHRIONI _ _ _ _ _
IASLNAGTA _ _ _ _ _
HISENSAEP _ _ _ _ _
IIPPILPHNAS _ _ _ _ _
COISNSLASO _ _ _ _ _
HSSNTELONSIAA _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _
TMHOIYT _ _ _ _ _
UTTSI _ _ _ _ _
HLOENPIM _ _ _ _ _
SWEBERH _ _ _ _ _
JEMSA _ _ _ _ _
PREET _ _ _ _ _
UDEJ _ _ _ _ _
ETVELORNAI _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _

Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Study Crossword - Family by Josiah Beachy

(The King James Version is required.)

➤ "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be ____ upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12—**10 Across**

➤ "Children, obey your parents in the ____: for this is right." Ephesians 6:1—**1 Down**

➤ "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first ____ with promise;)" Ephesians 6:2—**16 Across**

➤ "Children, obey your ____ in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Colossians 3:20—**7 Down**

➤ "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all ____ of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:3—**5 Down**

➤ "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy ____ shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 28:14—**13 Across**

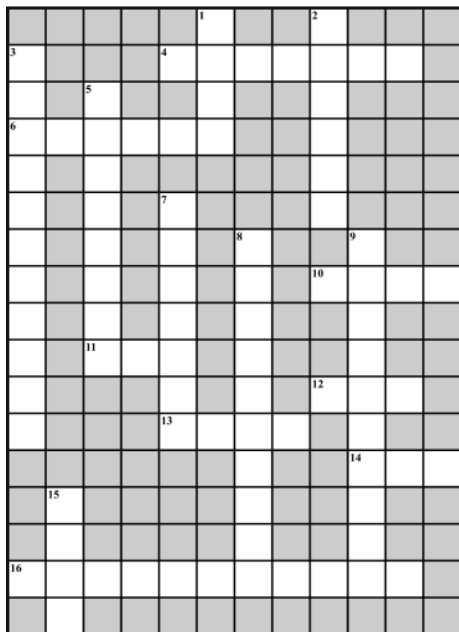
➤ "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole ____ in heaven and earth is named." Ephesians 3:14, 15—**2 Down**

➤ "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have ____ on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49:15—**9 Down**

➤ "When my father and my mother ____ me, then the LORD will take me up." Psalms 27:10—**4 Across**

➤ "My son, hear the ____ of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Proverbs 1:8—**3 Down**

➤ "My son, keep thy father's



commandment, and forsake not the ____ of thy mother." Proverbs 6:20—**12 Across**

➤ "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to ____ understanding." Proverbs 4:1—**15 Down**

➤ "In this was ____ 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 4:9—**8 Down**

➤ "He that ____ not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32—**6 Across**

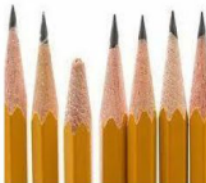
➤ "He that hath the ____ hath life; and he that hath not the ____ of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12 (1 word)—**14 Across**

➤ "If the ____ therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36—**11 Across**

You may want to remove this sheet for your children!

*"With
GOD
All Things
Are
Possible!"*

Life without JESUS
is like an
UNSHARPENED pencil
it has **no**
point




Answers and Quotes

Don't carry your mistakes
around with you.
Instead, place them under
your feet and use them
as stepping stones.
NEVER REGRET.
If it's **good**, it's **wonderful**.
if it's **bad**, it's **experience**.

Bonus

How many times can you find the word "law" in
the first article? _____



Answers for the Last Issue:

Meeting(s) 10



Answers from January 2016

June-July 2016

not to WANT to touch it. That is entering into a realm that neither I nor my children are able to enforce. For this to happen, our desires—likes and dislikes—would have to change.

So why did God put such a command in His Ten Commandments? I believe it was to show the utter inability for anyone to keep His law without having a transformed heart. Of Jesus, the Bible prophesied that He "...will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21). True to this prophecy, Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:..." (Matthew 5:21, 22). You may have thought you were keeping the Sixth Commandment because you didn't kill anybody today, but according to Jesus, you are guilty even if you are angry with others without a cause. That brings it up to another level. He expanded more of the Ten Commandments later in that chapter, each time calling for changes that are not even possible on our own.

I believe the Tenth Commandment is given to remind us that we cannot keep these on our own. It requires a transformation that none of us can perform. I could tell my twelve-year-old son that I want him to build me a rocket ship so I can visit Mars in three months. I would know that he will not be able to perform my command. I could do this in hopes that he will realize his own weakness and ask for help. God never expected the unrepentant sinner to be

able to keep His law (Romans 8:7). Instead, He wanted to point out his need, which would bring him to Christ.

Fruit of the Spirit

The Bible says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:22-24). This beautiful fruit cannot be generated, but is a natural result of receiving God's Spirit in our hearts. Notice the way these characteristics are described as the fruit of the Spirit. So, receiving the Spirit goes before receiving this fruit. If you are in need of this fruit, ask God for His Spirit, which He says He will gladly give to those who ask (Luke 11:13).

Jesus said, "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 15:4, 5). Jesus did not tell us that we must bear fruit; He said that if we abide in the vine we WILL bear much fruit. The fruit will come as a natural result of abiding in the vine. We are so often sidetracked into focusing on bearing fruit, but that is not our job. Our only job is to abide in Christ, the vine. It is "God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:7). Do not get sidetracked! Do not focus on whether there is fruit or no fruit. No matter what is happening to the fruit, you need to maintain a

tight connection to the vine. That union will ensure that fruit will come. No amount of fruit-generating on your part will help. Apple trees do not need to focus on producing apples, they just have to remain connected to the root system, and nature will take care of the rest.

Friends, God wants to see you flourish. He wants to see you shine and bear much fruit. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:2-4). Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and

they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:27-29). You have a mission and a purpose. Your destiny is to flourish in the way you were created to be, in the image of God.

Your life will never be complete with merely earthly riches or fame. The only thing that matters is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). May God’s purpose be fulfilled in your life as you seek to be “rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:17). »

Unconditional Love

by Lynnford Beachy

Note: In the last issue of *Present Truth*, I mentioned a Bible study the Lord gave me to share on a live radio broadcast in the Dominican Republic. The following article is based on that study. I pray that you will be blessed.

God originally made the world to be the eternal home for mankind. Everything He made was very good. Before He made humans on the earth, He garnished it with immense beauty, and then to top it off, He prepared an incredible garden for them to enjoy. Everywhere Adam and Eve looked there was evidence of God’s love and care for them. They loved and trusted God with all their hearts.

Sadly, something happened to disrupt the beautiful communion shared by God and humanity. Love cannot be genuine if it is forced. Robots cannot love anyone! True love must be exercised by those who have the freedom to choose otherwise. For Adam and Eve, that option was through the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was here that Satan had the opportunity to tempt them to disobey God. The Bible says, “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat

of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:1-3).

Up to that time in Eve's life she knew that God loved her unconditionally and, therefore, she loved God with all of her heart. She knew that God had withheld the fruit of the forbidden tree because He loved her. This is similar to rules I give my children. I tell them, "Do not play in the street," "Do not play with fire," "Do not jump off the roof," etc. I give them these restrictions, not to keep them from having fun, but to protect them from harm. This is why God told them not to eat the fruit; He knew that if they did, they would die.

"...the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5). Satan directly attacked God's character by stating that He is a selfish liar for withholding supposedly "good" fruit from them. Eve believed this lie, and her outlook on God changed. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" Genesis 3:6). As long as Eve viewed the fruit as bad for her, she saw God as good for withholding it from her. But as soon as she believed that the fruit was good, she began to look upon God as bad for withholding it from her.

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:7-10).

After they sinned, God's approach terrified Adam and Eve. Prior to this, they were delighted to see God coming to spend time with them. This time, something was different! Their eyes had become affected by the devil. They started to look upon God as Satan does. God didn't change, they did! God was still as loving as always. Notice that God did not abandon them when they sinned. Instead, He came looking for them.

When we sin, we have the tendency to think that God does not like us anymore. But that could not be further from the truth. In reality, God loves us tremendously even when we sin. In fact, it was for sinners that Christ came to die. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." (Romans 5:8, 10).

After Adam and Eve sinned, their perceptions of God changed so that they no longer loved and trusted Him with all their hearts. The root cause of all sin is doubt or disbelief of

God's love for us. "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). For sin to be rooted out of us, love and trust must be restored. We are to be "...rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17).

The Root of the Problem

Too often, we focus on symptoms, rather than the root cause. If you are struggling with sin in your life today, I guarantee that sin is not the problem. It is only a symptom of the real problem. The real problem is a failure to comprehend God's immense love for you. If you are having marital problems, relationship problems, addictions, depression, etc., you will surely benefit from a deeper picture of God's love for you.

Humans live badly because they do not grasp how precious they are to God. When Jesus was being nailed to the cross, He prayed for His persecutors, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Has somebody wronged you? Have you been mistreated? I guarantee it was done by someone who did not realize 1) how precious they are to God, and 2) how terribly wrong and misguided were their words or actions. I beg of you, do not let the misdeeds of others dictate who you are today. Get your connection with God right, then no matter what others do, it will not affect your relationship with Him.

Beholding to be Changed

What do you spend your time doing? What are you focusing your attentions upon? Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Whatever you spend

time beholding will have an affect upon you. "...we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). To be transformed into God's character of love, you must behold it. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us... (1 John 3:1). The more deeply and persistently you behold His love, the more you will be changed into His image. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

By far, the best place to see God's love, is to grasp what He gave for you. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). Since God was willing to deliver up His beloved Son for us all, we know that He is willing to give everything up for us. That is incredible! God would give up everything for you. That is how much you mean to Him.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Let that sink in deeply into your being. Do not brush it off. Contemplate how completely God loves you, and then remain there, never let that revelation go.

John wrote, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9, 10).

How hard do you think it would be to offer up your son to save people who are your enemies? Discovering the magnitude of the gift given for you will allow you to see your own value in God's eyes. Increasing your knowledge and awareness of your own value will elevate how you value those around you. This will draw you closer to the Lord and enhance all of your relationships. This is why Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40).

There is a cause and effect relationship for all that you do. Any problems can be traced all the way

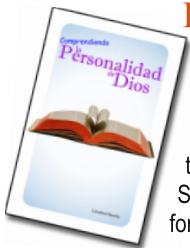
back to how you see God and His love for you. Get that right, and everything will change for the better. This is all tied to how you see Jesus, for He is the gift God gave for you.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?... He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:4, 5, 12). Get deeply connected to Christ through a knowledge of Him and His Father, and you will be richly blessed in every area of your life.

Spend at least an hour each day meditating on the life of Christ, especially the closing scenes, and all those around you will be amazed as they see Jesus shining out of you (Isaiah 60:1-3). »

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Editor: Lynnford Beachy, PO Box 315, Kansas, OK 74347, **phone: (304) 633-5411**. Jim Raymond, phone: (407) 421-6025, e-mail: newsletter@presenttruth.info.

Present Truth Ministries

PO Box 315

Kansas, Oklahoma 74347

U. S. A.