

## 12. Objectives for Growth in Ministry for New Christians

In our last topic, we began with the statement from Jethro to Moses, in Exodus 18:20, where Jethro told Moses: ““And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” We saw that Moses was to help the people grow spiritually in three ways:

- ◆ He was to teach the people ordinances and laws - growth in the Word of God.
- ◆ He was to show the people the way to walk - growth in character and attitude.
- ◆ He was to show the people the work to do - growth in ministry.

We talked in our last topic about how to help new Christians grow in character and attitude and also how to help them grow in knowledge of the Word of God. We saw that those things will transform their spirits and their souls. Today, we will be talking about helping them grow in ministry which will change their actions (body). Our goal is to see transformation in all areas of life: spirit, soul and body.

In helping new Christians and spiritual toddlers grow in ministry, our goal is a transformed relationship with others. This includes:

- \* A transformed relationship with God - The great command - Matthew 22:37-38
- \* A transformed relationship with our neighbor - The second command - Matthew 22:39
- \* A transformed relationship with Christians - The new command - John 13:34-35

We will give a more detailed discussion on how a new Christian builds his relationship with God in our next topic. For today, we just want to focus on helping them learn to think and practice the great commandment. In Matthew 22:3-38, Christ answered a lawyer who asked Him, ““Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, ‘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.’” Here, we see that the great commandment is to love God. This love is to be with:

1. All our heart
2. All our soul
3. All our mind

In addition, Mark 12:30 adds with:

4. All our strength

These verses speak of the completeness of our love for God. True love affects every area of our lives. In helping new Christians to learn to love God with a complete love, we will best teach them how to show that kind of love by our own love for God. When people first become Christians, many have no understanding of the kind of love mentioned here. They talk about being in love (often an emotional feeling), wanting to make love (a desire to satisfy their own lusts) or loving their family (a care and concern for family). However, most new Christians have never understood the kind of love commanded in this verse.

That is why these verses define this love by saying that we are to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. In 1 John 2:15, this same word is used when it says, “Do not love the

world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” By comparing these verses, we see that a person has either chosen to love the world or the person has chosen to love God. This is why it is so important to emphasize, “Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Acts 20:21) when we are sharing the Gospel with a person who is not yet a Christian. True decisions for Christ are based on both repentance and faith. To help the new Christian transform his relationship with God, we model by our example:

- Love for God - 1 John 4:10-11, 19
- Obedience to God - John 14:15; Matthew 7:24-27

The second command is given in Matthew 22:39, “And *the second is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Christ defines our neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan as the people around us. The same word for love is used here that is used in the previous verses where we are commanded to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind. This love develops only as we help new Christians begin to see the world as Christ sees the world. Christ showed this love for the world in Matthew 9:36-38, where we read: “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then, He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

New Christians will develop compassion for the world around them as they see our compassion for a lost and dying world. They will see that best as we take them with us as we share the Gospel with others. We also want to help them start praying for the salvation of their relatives (John 1:41-42), friends (John 1:45-46), co-workers (Matthew 9:9-10), neighbors, and other acquaintances (Mark 1:30-33). As they pray for those that they know, we should offer to go with them to share the Gospel with the relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances for whom they are praying. In this way, we are showing them how to share the Gospel and minister to those who are not yet Christians.

The third command is the new commandment Christ gave to the disciples in John 13:34-35, where we read: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” The statement that we are to love one another is repeated again in the following verses: John 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 4:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22, 4:8; 1 John 3:11 and 23, 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5. As we can see, the Lord makes it very clear that as Christians we are to love one another.

We will not show the kind of love that Christ showed if we depend on our own strength. In our own strength, we will act out of fear and be more likely to do the twelve things we are commanded to avoid in our relationship with one another. When we act out of fear, we are tempted to:

- Judge one another - Romans 14:13
- Go to law with one another - 1 Corinthians 6:7
- Deprive one another - 1 Corinthians 7:5
- Bite one another - Galatians 5:15 - to wound the soul by speaking evil words
- Devour one another - to make a habit of wounding the soul
- Consume one another - the last act of swallowing down “bite-devour-consume” speaks of the

process which destroys a relationship

- Challenge one another - Galatians 5:26
- Envy one another - Galatians 5:26
- Lie to one another - Colossians 3:9
- Repay another with evil for evil - 1 Thessalonians 5:15
- Speak against one another - James 4:11
- Complain against one another - James 5:9

In order to love one another as Christ has loved us, we must make the choice to depend on the Holy Spirit so that the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us and the love of Christ is flowing through us. This means that we may have to pray several hundred times during the day, “Lord, give me your strength to act in love.” In addition to loving one another, there are thirty other commands of things that we are to do in our relationship with one another. As we pray, and ask the Lord to give us His strength to act in love, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to:

- ◆ Accept one another - Romans 15:7
- ◆ Admonish one another - Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- ◆ Bear one another’s burdens - Galatians 6:2
- ◆ Bear with one another - Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13
- ◆ Build up one another - Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- ◆ Care for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:25
- ◆ Comfort one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11; Hebrews 3:13, 10:25
- ◆ Be comforted together through faith in one another - Romans 1:12
- ◆ Have compassion one of another - 1 Peter 3:8
- ◆ Confess your sins to one another - James 5:16
- ◆ Be devoted to one another - Romans 12:10
- ◆ Fellowship with one another - 1 John 1:7
- ◆ Forgive one another - Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13
- ◆ Seek what is good for one another and for all men - 1 Thessalonians 5:15
- ◆ Greet one another - Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14
- ◆ Be hospitable to one another - 1 Peter 4:9
- ◆ Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another - 1 Peter 5:5
- ◆ Be kind to one another - Ephesians 4:32
- ◆ Be members one of another - Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25
- ◆ Be of the same mind one to another - Romans 12:16, 15:5
- ◆ Be at peace with one another - Mark 9:50; 1 Thessalonians 5:13
- ◆ Pray for one another - James 5:16
- ◆ Regard one another as more important than self - Philippians 2:3
- ◆ Serve one another as a slave - Galatians 5:13
- ◆ Employ your gift in serving one another - 1 Peter 4:10
- ◆ Stimulate one another to love and good deeds - Hebrews 10:24-25
- ◆ Submit to one another - Ephesians 5:21
- ◆ Teach one another - Colossians 3:16
- ◆ Wait for one another - 1 Corinthians 11:33
- ◆ Wash one another’s feet - John 13:14

A helpful way to help new Christians begin practicing the “one anothers” is to discuss one each week and encourage them to practice that “one another” in their relationships with others that week. In seven months, they will have focused on each “one another” for an entire week. In three years, they will have gone through the list five times and the “one anothers” will start to become a part of their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help new Christians learn to love the Lord, learn to love the lost and learn to love one another as Christ has loved us.