

## CHAPTER X

### LIVING LOVE AS A NEW WAY OF LIFE

*Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,  
That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.  
(Romans 12:2)*

Spirit filled Christians have a sixth sense which is supernatural. It is sensitivity to a need in another person for love and acceptance. Initially, the person needing to be loved and accepted may be threatened when our sensitivity reaches out to them. In fact, there may be open hostility when agape love which gives without expecting something in return is first displayed to them. However, as they see this love in action, they begin to hunger and thirst for its source.

This isn't a 'preachy' type of encounter. We are like light houses. People see the light, and as they are drowning in circumstances that surround and overwhelm them, we throw them the life line of becoming involved with them in an acceptance encounter where they are.

Quite early in the walk in the Spirit, I realized the effectiveness of my life as far as God was concerned was tied up on the scripture in *Galatians 6:1-3* which says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such as one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

I had to face the fact that my whole Christian walk before I began to walk in the Spirit had been laced with this attitude of self-deception, thinking I was something in my own self efforts. As I became more aware of the fact that Jesus is not as interested in performance as He is in attitude, I saw I must approach my interaction with other people in the same way if they were to see Jesus in and through me.

It was a startling thing the day I realized God didn't love me any more as a Christian than He had as a non-Christian (*Romans 5:8-18*). Long before I became aware that a relationship with Him was what I needed to give real meaning to my life, He had died for my sins on the cross in Jesus Christ and had provided my salvation by the Blood shed on that cross for my sins. Even though He didn't love me more than He had before, the Word tells me there was much rejoicing in heaven by the angels at the point of my believing and accepting truth. The rejoicing was because, although God's love for me was no different, I was different.

I now had a new heart which had been opened up to receive God's love into my life along with the ability to respond to this love (*1 John 4:19*). I had now entered into all His blessings and all the things He had prepared for me because I now was able to love Him (*1 Corinthians 2:9-12*).

Since God had loved me and provided salvation at His expense, whether I ever took it or not (the choice was entirely up to me), I began to see this is the love stance I must have toward other people. I must be willing to share His love with no strings attached, nothing to be expected in return from others.

When we walk in love, Holy Spirit prepares others for their encounter with Him through us. And, results are positive as we are obedient to share His love. We have been created unto good works because of our union with Him. The good works are not self-effort but an overflow from the abundant life we have in Him.

We don't have to go looking for people to help; we simply encounter them as we are going through each day in the main-stream of life. This interaction is not only with other Christians but also among those who don't know God. Our love and acceptance of them is God's first link in the chain of events to bring them unto Himself. Jesus really meant it when He said we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As we interact in this way with others, *Philippians 2:14-16* assures us we are accepted as God's child and will not be cut off from His love as we walk in the world. And, Paul goes on to say we shine as lights in the world, as we hold forth the word of life.

As God has allowed me to teach and interact with others through the years, the thing I have received the most gratitude for has been that I loved them where they were, as they were, in the beginning of our relationship. In the beginnings of these relationships I almost always felt a little apprehension about my ability to cope with their situation, but one thing I learned early in the walk in the Spirit was that in union with Jesus, all the love I needed to interact with them was poured into the situation, and this set me free from fear.

The great thing about knowing you don't have the responsibility of helping them on your own is that there is never any misunderstanding on their part as to who the real helper is. They know it is Jesus working through you.

You can never be God's person in an effective way if you are not willing to become involved in situations with people of His choosing. Perhaps this was the hardest adjustment I had to make when I began to walk in the Spirit. I no longer could choose who I wanted to become involved with. I had to be willing to become involved with those who were crying out to Him for help who would come into the sphere of my life.

To illustrate how God has worked this out through my life, I am going to share an ongoing experience Roger and I had with a woman God brought into our life about nine years ago. The relationship began when God moved us to a town of about 30,000 people, where Roger worked on a steel construction project for the National Science Foundation which lasted five years. Within a month after we moved there we joined a local church. An appeal was made to minister to three children who needed a foster home while their mother, who had suffered a nervous breakdown, could be sent to the State Mental Hospital for rehabilitation.

On the way home from church, Roger and I discussed the situation and felt we were to be involved, but we were very reluctant to foster-home three small children although we had foster-homed and helped raise one foster son. I called the pastor who had made the appeal and he told me the mother had suffered the breakdown after being abandoned by the husband and father. He shared with me how she had been admitted to the psychiatric ward of the hospital because she called him and others night after night, crying and saying she was dying, and that the room was closing in on her, and that she was smothering to death. I knew she was experiencing demonic activity in her life.

I didn't sleep much that night. I was so burdened for her and I prayed for God to allow someone to know what her real problem was and bring deliverance to her. I thought I was praying for her doctor or a minister who would work with her in the mental hospital. As it turned out, I was praying for Roger and myself.

By morning, God had let me know what our involvement was to be. We were to take her out of the hospital into our home and minister deliverance and love to her. When I called the pastor the next morning and told him, he said he would talk to her doctor to see what he thought. God was in it and the doctor agreed for us to take her.

A foster home was found for the three children and we brought her into our home. The spirit of fear was so completely in control of this woman that for the first two nights she was with us, I sat by her bed and held her hand until she finally slept due to exhaustion. I'm so grateful that the spiritual gift of discerning of spirits was at my disposal through indwelling Holy Spirit.

By the third day, I began to talk to her about her relationship with God. She was very upset and was sure she had committed a sin that God could never forgive her for. I shared some scripture with her and explained that Jesus Christ had covered all her sins with His blood on the cross and that if she confessed her sin and asked for forgiveness, that God would forgive her. Faith took over and she settled a relationship with God through Jesus Christ as best she could at that point.

It took her months to begin to believe she could forgive herself, but her reaching out to God for forgiveness gave us a start in the right direction. As she began to feel more at ease with us, I told her I thought she was having demonic oppression evidenced by the fear she kept experiencing, and I suggested that she could be delivered.

I didn't know how she might react to this because I had encountered the demons briefly at times when I would have eye contact with her, and there was hostility in these encounters, but she accepted with great relief. She had talked to her doctor and one pastor about a power in her which took over at times and made her do things against her will. But, they had not been sympathetic, and so she decided she really was 'crazy' to think such a thing.

Roger and I had very little experience with demonic activity, but the Jesus we were in union with had a lot of experience recorded in the Gospels, so we just turned it over to Him, to do through us what He told us to do. He had given us a real love for this girl and had taken all fear of the situation away. When

we decided it was time for deliverance, we sat her in a chair and Roger just exercised the authority that was his (*1 John 4:4*) and commanded the spirit of fear to come out of her in the name of Jesus.

There had been a darkness in her countenance and skin tone, and her hair was very unmanageable. As the spirit of fear left her, her whole countenance was changed; a softness came into her eyes and face. Her skin became clear and beautiful and her hair became softer.

Every few days she would begin to get agitated and the darkness would come back and when these signs of oppression would become evident, we would listen for the demon to name itself such as anger, rejection, suicide, and etc., then we would come against it in the name of Jesus and she would be delivered with the amazing change in countenance.

After about ten days, she had been completely delivered and was off of most of her medication. In about five weeks, she was able to go back to her apartment and have her children back with her. Of course, this was just the beginning. Her self image had been shattered through all the trauma she had experienced. She carried more weight than she should on her body and this was a source of distress for her.

She was on welfare and had no other source of income. She had no car and was totally dependent on others for transportation. We saw her need to be able to do things for herself again and were able to help her get an old car. Just that and enough money each week to buy gasoline was our way of allowing her to feel some self worth again. It was such a little thing for us to do but it meant the world to her.

We had one well-meaning person in our church come to us and warn us about doing too much for her, making her dependent on us. They were speaking from a similar experience. But, we evidently had an advantage they hadn't had. She didn't owe us anything. We had gone into the relationship because God told us to as His instrument of love, not for any gain of our own. We trusted Him to protect and guide in the relationship and He did. Our job was to accept her and love her as she was and not base what we did for her on how she performed for us. But, an interesting thing happened, because we didn't make demands of her that were beyond where she was, she tried hard to make us proud of her performance.

She was not comfortable in our church because she felt no acceptance from most of the congregation so we made no demands on her in this area. She went to another church with some regularity but I never checked on her to see if she was attending church. Not that I felt church was unimportant but I knew God had involved me to show her He was involved in the nitty-gritty of everyday living through me. I was her friend, not her spiritual monitor.

I can't pretend the relationship didn't have its ups and downs. If I have made our part in this relationship seem easy, let me share a few of the struggle I had. There were many days when I would have to deal with myself in the area of forgiveness for trespasses I was feeling in regard to my time and privacy. There were times when I would rebel briefly against my union with Christ that demanded things at His convenience, not mine. But, as I, by an act of my will, got back in line with Jesus, I became blessed with joy in what I was doing.

There were times when I struggled with self-righteousness because of the ways we helped her. Then, I would be reminded that it is easy to 'buy' our way with people when it is no great sacrifice on our part to do so. It is the giving of self that comes hard at times.

About two years after we became involved with her, she had to be hospitalized for some knee surgery. When it was time for me to take her home from the hospital she confided with me that she dreaded going home because she had been so depressed the week before going to the hospital that she had left her apartment in a mess. I assured her that I would find someone to help me and we would clean the apartment before she went home. I called the church to see if there was anyone who could help me, but everyone had other plans. I called the state employment office and they assured me they could have someone there the next morning.

The welfare department had found a place for the children to stay while she was in the hospital, so no one had been in her apartment during her stay in the hospital. I went to the apartment a little early the next morning to see what needed to be done. It really was a mess. Soured water stood in dirty pots and dishes in the kitchen. Beds were unmade, clothes were scattered, and the children's rooms were upside down.

I began to plan cleaning strategy. You can be sure I had plans for the help from the employment office to clean that kitchen and the bathroom. I'd clean the rest of the apartment and do the laundry. I went down to wait for my help, but after thirty minutes past the time they were due, it was apparent no one was going to show.

What was I going to do? Surely God didn't expect me to go clean up that mess by myself? But, of course, that is just what He had in mind. For a few minutes, feelings ran rampant. I almost screamed, "God isn't there a limit?" In my spirit I heard Him say, "How would you have felt if I had asked that question when I went to the cross to clean up your mess?"

All I could do was roll up my sleeves and go to work. I wish I could say I experienced joy as I worked, I did experience some jabs of anger which I'm sure kept the adrenaline flowing so I would have enough energy to complete the job. After about five hours of cleaning and gathering eight loads of laundry to be washed later, the apartment was a beautiful sight to behold.

As I left to go pick her up at the hospital, God began to let me see what a love gift this was going to be to her. After going by the grocery store for some food, I took her to the apartment. She was moving slowly because of her knee so I went on ahead with the groceries. When she came in the doorway I said, "Welcome home." She stood in the doorway looking around her and began to weep. She knew I had done all the cleaning by myself.

It took several months to see just what God had done through me that day. Nothing I had ever done for her ministered to her as much as the love and acceptance I showed for her in being willing to clean up her apartment. It was the beginning on her part of a realization that God also loved her right where she was. It didn't make any difference to her that I would have bought my way out of it if I could have found

someone to do the dirty work. The fact was I did it when she needed it done. From that day to this, I have never found her not taking pride in the way her house was kept clean.

This incident took place over six years ago. Since then, God moved us back to Dallas, Texas and moved her to another city where she has a sister. She took a Civil Service examination after she got settled there and got a job which enabled her to get off welfare.

She still has many problems with her finances because she has never had any help with child support, but she is doing an admirable job raising three teenagers. And, they have shown responsibility by helping her in the ways they are able to.

God has kept us involved with her because she has needed help and encouragement through the years. She will be glad when the day comes that she no longer needs financial help from us, but as we have become her spiritual parents, she will always need to draw on us for counsel and encouragement.

When I see how far she has come, I am excited and expectant about what God has in her future. In a letter I had from her a couple of years ago she said, "You should see me, I'm so changed. I laugh a lot now. I am truly His, and I have found God's peace and joy in my heart. My main goal now is for me and my children to serve the Lord. I feel like a thousand pounds have been lifted from my heart. The constant searching for someone has gone, that someone is now Jesus."

It took me a long time to see what Jesus was saying to His disciples (and to me) in *Matthew 28:19-29*, when He came to them in Galilee after His resurrection. I had always seen the Great Commission as leaving all to go to the whole world to give them God's Commandments so they could become His disciples. This concept is true as far as it goes but there is no real discipling without a life-style to back it up. As Christians, we go about our daily activities being obedient to God's commands on our lives. As others observe our loving interaction with God, they will be drawn to Him. This is the way we lift Him up, He does the drawing unto Himself.

Jesus gave us the master plan for discipling. When people came to Jesus with a need, He immediately dealt with the problem. He accepted people where they were. Sinful men and women didn't seem to bother Him much but He was incensed by the pride and tradition of the religious of the day. He couldn't help all people because some were threatened by His life-style. Although we will never be as adept as He was at meeting needs, we must always be available.

We spend too much of our energies trying to tell others what they are doing wrong. Actually, we can never really know where another person is coming from. Only God can know that. When I concentrate on being God's person in the situation, I become usable.

We don't love the world system, but we are free to love all the people we encounter in the world system. We feel no need to withdraw; we have a steadfast desire to lift up Christ by being His person so He can draw people to Himself through us.

There are some very basic truths John gave us in his First Epistle that we need to concentrate on until they are like the bread we eat and the air we breathe. He says we need no teacher other than Holy Spirit; since our hope is fixed in Him we are purified as He is pure; we are righteous, even as He is righteous; we cannot practice sin because we are born of God; greater is He that is in us than he (Satan) who is in the world; His love is perfected in us; as He is, so are we in this world. We know that the Son of God . . . hath given us understanding, that we may know Him that is true . . . Jesus Christ.

It is wonderful to rest in our union with Him! We are able to rest while working a full day out in the world system of things. We rest in Him in the midst of the various activities of our total day. We accept the fact that He is in every circumstance of each day. He never forsakes us or leaves us.

Just as Jesus could not be all things to all people, neither can we. I quit frustrating and complicating my life by trying. As long as I know I am pleasing to God in my daily activity that's all that counts.

My husband has a little saying he uses often, "Me plus God is enough."

God is love. We can always count on that love. There is an infinite supply!