



**WEEKLY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**

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# “GOD SETS THEM UP”

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Lesson 1 ■ For week ending January 2, 2021

We’ve just come through a contentious election. People are disappointed that their candidate was not elected. This is nothing new! People routinely contest the outcome of most Presidential Elections including the 2016 election. So, what’s a Christian to do? It’s important to realize and to understand that God is in control of this world. The Bible tells us emphatically that He sets kings up and He takes them down as well. Our job as believers is to trust God’s judgment and His ways. When we understand that God has a purpose for everything that He does, we can trust that everything is working for our good!

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**KEY TEXT: “He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars” (Daniel 2:21, NLT).**

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**1. God tells us emphatically that there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). In The Church of God, we call this principle, *Divine Law*.**

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- » *Divine Law* is further expanded upon in Ecclesiastes 3:14,15.
  - » In the Church, we consider this principle to be the foundation of how we look at and interpret God’s Word. We basically acknowledge that what is prophetically happening today will most likely have a type and shadow in the Old Testament. Why? Because there is nothing new under the sun.
  - » The key text was written by Daniel while he was a slave in captivity in Babylon (Daniel 1:1,2).
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**2. When the key text was written, Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar is one of the most clearly defined illustrations of God using a wicked ruler to accomplish His will.**

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- » If you’ve read the Old Testament, you know that Israel had a “rocky” relationship with Yahweh God. Sometimes they obeyed, but a lot of times they disobeyed. Eventually, God had enough.
  - » It was then that God decided to punish Judah/Israel. According to Jeremiah 25:1-7, what was God’s reason for punishing Judah?
  - » What was God’s punishment that He decreed? Read Jeremiah 25:8-11.
  - » When God decided to punish Judah, He used the King of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) to accomplish this task. Read Jeremiah 25:9 again. What did God call the King of Babylon?
  - » Because God used Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish His will, did that exempt the wicked king from being punished? Read Jeremiah 25:12-14.
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**3. God is able to use whomever He chooses to accomplish His will. God used President Donald Trump to accomplish His will. God will also use President-elect Joe Biden to accomplish His will as well.**

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- » God used President Trump to show favor to Israel. Under President Trump’s administration, the biblical capital of Israel—Jerusalem—was re-established. Also, the Trump Administration recognized the Golan Heights (the northern mountains of Israel) as Israeli territory.
- » What is the significance of the Golan Heights recognition? That is where we are watching for the start of the Battle of Gog and Magog: a war that takes place in the northern mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:18-21). This Last Days’ battle occurs when a group of Muslim nations attack Israel for her wealth (Ezekiel 38:1-6,11,12).
- » Also, the Trump Administration helped broker new peace treaties between Israel and Muslim Nations. This is significant in the aspect that it is a *broken peace treaty* that helps ignite the attack on Israel from “those that are at peace with you” (Read Obadiah 1:6,7).

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# “WE ARE THEOCRATS”

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Lesson 2 ■ For week ending January 9, 2021

Okay, it's true. There is no political party known as **THEOCRATS**. But, maybe there should be! In The Church of God, we are not Republicans or Democrats: we are Theocrats. A “theocrat” is *one who lives under a theocratic form of government*. Theocratic Government is Yahweh God's governmental system. There has been much division—and the resulting rancor—in our country, our homes, and our churches, because we label people as one political party or another and then make broad assumptions about their beliefs or even “lack” of beliefs. There is no room for this kind of division in God's Church. God calls us to be ONE.

**KEY TEXT: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).**

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## **1. First, we need to be careful when we lump whole groups of people under one title.**

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- » We saw a lot of this in the 2020 General Election. As believers, we cannot afford to make general judgments/statements about a large group of people and either accept them, or reject them, based on that judgment (Matthew 7:1,2; Romans 2:1).
  - » The 2 prominent political parties in the USA cannot possibly fully represent the millions of people who associate with them. The Bible is clear that our struggle is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12).
  - » If we alienate and offend whole groups of people because of their political affiliation, how can we ever minister to them? Read II Timothy 2:24,25 and I Corinthians 9:22.
  - » As the Church, our mandate comes from Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20).
  - » What does Peter tell us to do when it comes to secular government? Read I Peter 2:13-17.
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## **2. As believers, we need to be careful when we share our political views with the intent to impugn or alienate potentially large masses of people.**

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- » Now, this is not about compromise; however, everything that we do must be done through the filter of LOVE. Isn't that what I Corinthians 13:2 says?
  - » In this age of Facebook, Twitter, and all the rest, we need to be wise about what we post and say (Proverbs 18:21; 21:23). We should also be “*slow to post*” (lol)! Read James 1:19,20.
  - » Will your sarcastic post really change anyone's point of view on the subject (Ephesians 4:29; James 1:26)? Do your posts point people to Christ, or to your political affiliation (Proverbs 11:30)?
  - » Instead of engaging in the darkness that is engulfing our society, what are we as believers supposed to be doing? Read Isaiah 60:1,2; Proverbs 15:1; and Proverbs 9:7-9.
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## **3. We are called to be LIGHT, not DARKNESS.**

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- » **Are you up for a challenge?** Most of us are carrying a cell phone that is smarter than we are! If you are on Facebook or Twitter, you have an instrument in your hands that can influence everyone who sees it. Let's challenge ourselves to **BE THE LIGHT** in 2021.
- » Most of us have hundreds of friends on Facebook. If you were asked to speak in front of an audience of 300 people—what would you say? The fact is, most of us have that opportunity already in our hand!
- » Right before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave instructions to His disciples. Read Acts 1:1-8.
- » Jesus instructs us to be “*witnesses to Me*”. While you may not want to stand up before the multitudes, you can witness about Jesus on your phone through your posts and texts.
- » According to Daniel 12:4, God allowed knowledge to be increased in the Last Days. While that increased knowledge has made our lives easier, we can also use it to share Jesus at every opportunity we can.
- » Our world is filled with lost and hurting people. They need Jesus just as much as you do.
- » Will you determine to use what God has placed in your hands to help show your friends and family that God still saves, heals, restores, renews, regenerates, forgives, rehabilitates, and reconciles those that will accept Him as their Lord and Savior? Read Psalm 34:18 ; Mark 16:15,16; and Romans 1:16.

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# “IS IT TIME FOR A ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT?”

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Lesson 3 ■ For week ending January 16, 2021

The Church of God believes that God’s Word calls for a one-world government to come to pass before the return of Jesus Christ at the 7<sup>th</sup> Trump. The Trump Administration spent 4 years pulling the United States of America out of world agreements and treaties. Many world leaders were alarmed at dismayed at these moves. The Biden Administration has already stated its desire to rejoin agreements and accords that help bring the world governments together collectively. Let’s see what God’s Word has to say about the world’s government in the Last Days.

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**KEY TEXT: “...And authority was given him [AntiChrist] over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (Revelation 13:7b).**

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## **1. It has always been Satan’s plan to supplant Yahweh God as the focus of our worship, service, and allegiance.**

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- » The word *supplant* means *to supercede and replace*.
- » Satan’s plan was delineated in Isaiah 14:12-15. What caused Satan’s initial downfall? Is it any wonder that *pride* is one of the 7 things that God hates?
- » Satan was successful in deceiving one-third of the angels of heaven to follow him which resulted in all of them being expelled to the earth (Revelation 12:3,4; Jude 1:6).
- » Satan wants to be worshiped as the leader of this world. He even tempted Jesus—while He was in the wilderness for 40 days—to bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8-11).

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## **2. A one-world government is the ultimate goal of Satan.**

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- » In modern times, the concept of a one-world government began to be openly discussed starting in the early 1990s. President George H. W. Bush stated on September 11, 1990: “*Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge.*”
- » While former President Bush called this a “new” world order, the truth is Satan tried this concept before. Read the story of the Tower of Babel found in Genesis 11:1-9.
- » According to verse 4, they built a tower in order to “*make a name for ourselves.*” Here we can see the rise of “pride” in the people’s hearts (Isaiah 14:13).
- » The “new world order” concept is that humanity is progressing for the better (Proverbs 21:2), and they want to create a world where humans are unified and where there are no wars, conflicts, or borders.
- » Organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the Paris Climate Agreement, United Nations, European Union, appear to be pointing to a complete one-world government.

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## **3. Why does Satan want a one-world government? Because he is imitating Yahweh God’s plan to rule the world for 1,000 years.**

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- » Satan is an imitator of Yahweh God. He wants you and I to worship him—by force if necessary! Read Revelation 13:11-18.
- » The danger of a one-world government is that this new government wants to be the source of everything for the people. While it may appear good to begin with (money, healthcare, etc.), it will later be used for control and evil.
- » The AntiChrist is Satan’s version of Jesus Christ—the true Prince of Peace. Read Daniel 8:23-25, and discuss how Satan will use peace, deceit, and prosperity to destroy many.
- » According to Revelation 13:11, the AntiChrist will appear good in the beginning (he will look like a lamb); however, his true nature will soon be revealed (he speaks like a dragon).

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# “HOW MUCH GOVERNMENT DO I WANT IN MY LIFE?”

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Lesson 4 ■ For week ending January 23, 2021

The year 2020 was a year of many “firsts”. It was the first time that the government told us we could not meet in our churches. It was the first time that the government told us not to send our children to school. It was the first time that the government tried to control our family holiday celebrations. While the New Testament is not hostile to secular government, we need to be aware that secular governments are often driven by agendas that are not in alignment with our Christian beliefs. While our government should be there for us, we need to ask ourselves this question: “How much government do I want in my life?”

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**KEY TEXT: “And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17).**

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**1. Our previous lesson discussed the one-world government agenda (New World Order) that was front and center in the 2020 presidential election.**

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- » Now, to be clear, God is not against secular government. Jesus made this point when He walked this earth some 2,000 years ago (reference the key text).
  - » Consider what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:1-7.
  - » In the 2020 Election, we heard candidates use the words *socialist* and *socialism* to describe their philosophy concerning the role of government in our lives. We were told we should “demand” that our government supply us with free food, free education, free healthcare, and so on.
  - » **THE PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON IS NOT FOR A POLITICAL DISCUSSION.** The purpose is to identify the popular trend of EXPANDING THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT in our everyday lives.
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**2. The danger of having the government involved in every aspect of our lives—thus becoming our “source”—is that along with that assistance, comes “control” as well.**

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- » While we agree that government does play a role in our lives, we should be careful not to become dependant on the government for our existence. To see how government will fail you and revert to controlling you, discuss the former Soviet Union and Venezuela Governments for examples.
  - » Satan’s plan for the Last Days includes a one-world government that controls every aspect of our lives. We call his plan the MARK OF THE BEAST system.
  - » Read Revelation 13:16-18. Remember, at this time the AntiChrist will be ruling the entire world (Revelation 13:7). Discuss the control that this system will have over all commerce.
  - » While Satan’s system may initially seem good (who doesn’t want “free” things?), there is an evil system being set up to ensnare the people of God.
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**3. The Church of God believes that taking the Mark of the Beast is the unpardonable sin that Jesus referenced to His followers in Mark 3:28,29.**

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- » First, we must establish that to take the Mark of the Beast, means to be excommunicated from the Kingdom of God (Revelation 14:9-11).
- » The Church believes that taking the Mark of the Beast is equivalent to choosing Satan as your source over God and His Holy Spirit.
- » Thus the Words of Jesus in Mark 3:28,29 make complete sense. Jesus starts off by saying that “*all sins*” will be forgiven. He even includes that “*whatever blasphemies they utter*” will be forgiven. However, if you choose Satan as your source—so that you can buy, sell, and eat—then you have blasphemed God—your true Father and the source of everything in your life.
- » It’s the same scenario that happened in heaven with Satan and the angels. The angels that chose Satan over God were eternally damned (Jude 1:6,13) without hope of forgiveness.

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# “LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SIN”

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Lesson 5 ■ For week ending January 30, 2021

Fall 2020 was a divisive time in our country. The 2020 Election highlighted a growing division in our country and showcased the rancor and bitterness that has resulted from this division. As believers, it is important that we be PEACEMAKERS. It is possible to “agree to disagree” without resorting to being negative. As Christians, we must allow ourselves to be guided by unconditional love.

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**KEY TEXT:** *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*

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**1. It’s safe to say that *unconditional love* is the opposite of how our sinful flesh views love. Fleshly love is most definitely *conditional*. If you do what I want, then I will love you in return.**

- » Let’s consider the key text. God is the author of unconditional love: **AGAPE LOVE**. So, what is **AGAPE LOVE**? It is **a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return.**
- » Because God “so loved the world,” He allowed His only-begotten Son to be SACRIFICED—even though He knew most people would still reject Him (Matthew 7:14; Romans 5:8).
- » The truth is that the divide in our nation, has also seeped into our homes and our churches. It has caused division and hurt between family members and brothers and sisters in the Lord.
- » Most of us would say that we are only making a stand for what is right—in other words we are right and they are wrong—thus we offend one another (Proverbs 21:2; Proverbs 18:19).

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**2. Imagine if God had made that stand (I’m right, their wrong). Would there be any of us still standing? Where does mercy and grace come into the equation?**

- » First, we must establish the necessity of loving unconditionally. If you can’t establish the fact that you love someone first, they will not be open to receiving any of your “truth” (I Corinthians 13:2).
- » The Bible tells us that God loved us—while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). The fact that someone is a “sinner” should not allow us to STOP SHOWING THEM LOVE.
- » John 13:35 tells us that LOVE is how they will know we are Christians.
- » Ask yourself this question, “Is the way I deal with my family and friends driven by love? Do people know that I love them unconditionally?”

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**3. As believers, we know that prophecy tells us that things will deteriorate in the Last Days.**

- » Read II Timothy 3:1-5. We can see this happening in our society today.
- » However, we must not let people’s sins stop us from loving them. Thank God that He did not stop loving us because we were sinners (Romans 3:23).
- » So, how do we deal with sinners and show them unconditional love? We let the love of God work through us. How?
  - 1) We don’t judge them (Matthew 7:1,2). God is our judge. It is God’s job to judge us.
  - 2) We show them unconditional love (Ephesians 2:4,5), even if they are your enemy (Matthew 5:44).
  - 3) We look beyond their faults and see their need just as Jesus did with the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11).
  - 4) We help mentor them (James 5:20). We invest ourselves into their lives showing them how to grow in grace and truth (Colossians 3:13,14).
- » Read Isaiah 60:1,2. While gross darkness is covering the world, our job is to allow God’s glory to be seen in us. How? By letting God’s love cover a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8).

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# “GRACE AND MERCY”

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Lesson 6 ■ For week ending February 6, 2021

Last week we talked about the need to love one another unconditionally. For most of us, that is a real challenge! People get on our nerves (lol)! One of the best ways to show love to one another is to understand the role of grace and mercy in God’s salvation plan. Without the grace and mercy of God, none of us would be able to stand. Since we all have been the recipients of so much of God’s grace and mercy, let’s be sure to let it flow out of us to others as well! God tells us if we sow mercy, we will reap mercy in return (Galatians 6:7).

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**KEY TEXT: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (I Corinthians 15:10).**

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## 1. What exactly are MERCY and GRACE?

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- » **MERCY** is the act of *withholding deserved punishment*, while **GRACE** is the act of *endowing unmerited favor*. In His mercy, God does not give us punishment we deserve, namely hell; while in His grace, God gives us the gift we do not deserve, namely heaven (Ephesians 2:8,9).
- » Mercy and grace are the utmost attributes of love.
- » While God’s work of creation demonstrated His mighty power, God’s work of redemption revealed in His marvelous love, shown through mercy and grace. This very love of God is indispensable for the existence of life and the salvation of humanity. (Psalm 145:8,9).
- » Mercy and grace are two sides of a coin and the coin is love. Mercy is a compassionate love to the weak, and grace is a generous love to the unworthy. Humans are weak and unworthy. We all need God’s mercy and grace. Mercy takes us to the path of forgiveness, while grace leads us to reconciliation (Ephesians 2:1-5).

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## 2. Acknowledging our need for grace and mercy.

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- » To embrace the mercy and grace of God, we need humility (James 4:6).
- » We must first confess that all humans are sinners, nobody is able to meet God’s standard of perfection (Romans 3:23; 6:23).
- » The world we live in is broken, so we do not become obsessed with ourselves and things in this world. In doing so, we shift our focus from human centeredness to God and acknowledge His sovereignty over all things (Titus 2:11-14).
- » Mercy and pride liberate us from perfectionism, a prideful and rebellious heart. It is only by the Lord’s mercy and grace that we could live today (Hebrews 4:14-16).

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## 3. How should we treat others?

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- » It’s important that we understand that without the grace and mercy of God, none of us would be able to stand before God. With that being said, how should we treat those people around us (Ephesians 4:32)?
- » In times past, most of us thought a believer’s job was to show sinners their sin and how and why they are wrong (James 2:13). We were quick to judge people and celebrate the fact that we weren’t like them (Matthew 23:23).
- » Today, it’s important for us to remember that we are just like those sinners were it not for the grace and mercy of God extended to us (Colossians 3:12-14). Once we remember that, we will treat them with love, grace, and mercy as well (Matthew 5:7).

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# “DON’T CHANGE ANYTHING!”

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Lesson 7 ■ For week ending February 13, 2021

Most of us will admit that we are living in an ever-changing world. Technology is changing rapidly. While we used to have 3 TV channels to watch, we now have hundreds to choose from (and we still can’t find anything to watch—LOL!). The result? If you don’t like what you are watching—change it! We’ve also watched our churches change as well. While adapting our techniques and approach to sharing the Gospel is well and good, we are not permitted to change God’s Word to appease people. God’s Word is true and sure. It is the foundation on which we should build our lives.

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**KEY TEXT: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16,17).**

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## **1. In a rapidly-changing world, it’s important that we build our lives on a sure foundation.**

- » Jesus addressed this issue in Matthew 7, which is a continuation of His *Sermon on the Mount*.
- » Let’s start with Matthew 7:13,14. Our world is demanding that everything should be easier, faster, and less troublesome. How does Jesus describe the path which “*leads to life*”?
- » As believers, we do not have the right to demand that our Christian walk be easy, fun, and entertaining as well (II Timothy 3:1-7). What is meant by “*a form of godliness*”?
- » Jesus concludes His sermon in Matthew 7:24-27. Notice in both scenarios Jesus promised a storm was on the way.

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## **2. Let’s break down the words of Jesus.**

- » First, let’s review what Jesus said in the verses that preceded. Read Matthew 7:21-23.
- » According to verse 21, how do we successfully find our way to “*the kingdom of heaven*”? The “will” of God is outlined in the Holy Bible—the written Word of God.
- » Read verses 22 and 23 again. What was Jesus saying? He was telling the crowd that there are some who profess to be believers—and even did great works in His name—but they will ultimately be rejected by Jesus. Why? The answer is found in the preceding scriptures. Read Matthew 7:15-20.
- » Jesus labeled this group as “*false prophets*”. What made them “*false prophets*”? They changed the Word of God. Discuss how people can still get healed/see miracles even from false prophets.

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## **3. The Bible tells us that in the Last Days, people will have “itching ears.”**

- » Read II Timothy 4:1-5. The Apostle Paul is instructing Timothy (and all of us for that matter) on how to combat false doctrine. The first phrase in verse 2 says, “*Preach the word!*”
- » Our job as believers, ministers, and pastors, is to preach God’s Word in love (I Corinthians 13:2,13). Why? Because it is the truth and the sure foundation that will anchor us—and those who hear and do it—in a world that is rapidly changing.
- » You and I are living in a day when the majority of society “*will not endure sound doctrine.*” Our society is demanding that we change God’s Word in order to make them feel better about their sinful actions and lifestyles (Jeremiah 5:30,31; Romans 12:2).
- » Churches today have lowered standards, changed God’s Word, and taught fables instead of truth—just like Paul prophesied they would (II Timothy 4:4; John 14:21-24).
- » According to Revelation 22:18,19, we are not permitted to change anything about God’s Word. What happens to us if we do? Correlate this with the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23.

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# “THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY”

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I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 8 ■ For week ending February 20, 2021

Love is a concept that is misunderstood by many. Just what is real love and how do we find it and give it? The answer to these questions can be found in a study of I Corinthians 13. In this chapter, the Word of God defines for us what true love is and how we can live a lifestyle of love. In the coming weeks we are going to take an in-depth look at God’s definition of love. As we study God’s Word together, let’s allow the Holy Spirit to help us apply these principles to our lives. Only then will we find the more excellent way.

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**KEY TEXT: “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:31).**

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**1. In order to fully appreciate why the Apostle Paul wrote this dissertation on love in I Corinthians 13, we must examine the context in which it was written.**

- » In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Chapters of I Corinthians, Paul goes into great detail about the use of spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ.
- » The overarching message that is being conveyed is that the Gifts of the Spirit are given so that we might be able to bless and minister to the needs of others (I Corinthians 14:12).
- » The *more excellent way* Paul mentions at the end of Chapter 12 is an introduction to Chapter 13 which defines for us the proper motivation for desiring to use Spiritual Gifts.
- » Confirm this as you read I Corinthians 13:1-3.

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**2. The Greek word that is translated as charity or love in I Corinthians 13 is AGAPE.**

- » **Agape** is defined as *affection or benevolence which is a desire to do good to others.*
- » The depth of its meaning is more fully understood when you examine scriptures in which agape love is found.
- » Agape love describes God’s sacrificial love for mankind (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- » Agape love also expresses the essential nature of God (I John 4:8-10).
- » Agape love is conveyed when God’s children fulfill His will that we love one another (John 13:34,35).
- » Agape love is demonstrated when we choose to be like the Lord and love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).

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**3. We all have room to grow when it comes to living a life of agape love.**

- » Agape love goes against the grain of our carnal nature which is selfish and self-seeking.
- » This kind of godly love has to be exercised and perfected in our lives (I John 4:12,13).
- » It is God’s Spirit in us that enables us to love as He loves (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22-26).

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**4. The Word of God is like a mirror we look into to examine ourselves to see whether or not we are reflecting the likeness of our loving Savior, Jesus Christ.**

- » *“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it” (James 1:22-25, NLT).*
- » **NOTE:** We will be repeating the same Key Text throughout most of the study with an emphasis on what we are studying that week. Please use this as an opportunity to memorize this passage. Get it in your spirit! Make a commitment today. As you study the different aspects of Agape love in the coming weeks, allow the Holy Spirit to apply God’s Word to your heart. Be doers of the Word. Walk in love.

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# “LOVE IS PATIENT”

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I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 9 ■ For week ending February 27, 2021

At first glance, patience seems like an odd place to start a study on what love is. However, when you consider what it takes in many cases to have healthy relationships with the people in your life, it makes total sense. Our Heavenly Father has demonstrated this so many times in His relationship to us, the human race. Where would we be if it had not been for the longsuffering patience of God toward us? If we follow His example, by patience we will demonstrate that we truly love others.

**KEY TEXT:** “*Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance*” (I Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT).

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## 1. Let's start our study by defining what it means in the Bible to be patient.

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- » “Patience” is defined as *forbearance under suffering and endurance in the face of adversity*.
  - » Through patience we are able to hold back and not be impulsive with our response when faced with a difficult person or circumstance.
  - » There are two different words that are translated as *patience* in the New Testament.
    - 1) The first word is **makrothymia**, which generally expresses patience with regard to people (I Thessalonians 5:14). This is the word used in our Key Text to define love. It is also listed by the Apostle Paul as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
    - 2) The second word is **hypomone**. It is used in cases where patience is directed toward things. An example of this is Romans 12:12 where we are told to be “*patient in tribulation.*”
  - » Do you think love would even be possible without patience?
- 

## 2. Patience is a divine attribute demonstrated in the character of God.

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- » I John 4:8 tells us, “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*”
  - » Since God is love, it follows that patience will also be characteristic of who He is.
  - » There are many examples of how longsuffering the Father is with mankind.
  - » Read and discuss Exodus 34:6; I Peter 3:20; and Psalms 86:15.
- 

## 3. Jesus also exemplified love by His patience.

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- » It was *love* that nailed Jesus to the cross of Calvary. He could have called the angels of heaven to deliver Him (Matthew 26:53).
  - » Instead, He practiced *patience* as He suffered willing to pay the penalty for our sins (I Peter 2:23; Philippians 2:8).
  - » Jesus set an example for us to follow. When we truly love others, we will be willing to pay the price to bless them even when they are persecuting us (Hebrews 12:3).
  - » What do you think? Is it possible to learn patience without experiencing some tribulation?
- 

## 4. Patience is not something that comes naturally for most people (Romans 5:3-5).

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- » Take a moment to examine your heart. How patient do you consider yourself to be? Have you had any instances lately where you know you were not patient with someone?
- » Ask the Lord to help you by filling you with His Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit working in us that gives us the ability to be patient (Galatians 5:22; Colossians 1:11).
- » When we really love others, we will be patient with them (Ephesians 4:2; II Timothy 2:24).

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# “LOVE IS KIND”

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I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 10 ■ For week ending March 6, 2021

There have been many attempts to capture in words exactly what love is. Of course love is much more than just the words that we speak. Words without action to back them up do not amount to much. *Agape love* is a love that is expressed with kindness. It was demonstrated in the goodness of God toward us when He did not give us what we truly deserved, that is to be eternally lost. But, instead gave His only-begotten Son to save us. Not only did He save us, He made us His dear children. When we are filled with God's love, we will want to be good to others.

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**KEY TEXT:** *"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance"* (I Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT).

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## 1. What does it really mean to be *kind*?

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- » Strong's defines the word *kind* as *"to show oneself useful."* It is to act benevolently.
  - » Benevolence is the desire to do good to others.
  - » Being kind is more than simply being nice to someone. When you are nice, you are polite to people and you treat them well. It is possible to be nice to someone and at the same time not be kind. Being kind is when you care about people and you show you care.
  - » Consider this as you read Galatians 6:9,10.
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## 2. God showed us kindness by His grace.

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- » *Grace is favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that person deserves.*
  - » It is certain that God has not given us what we truly deserve (Psalms 103:8-12).
  - » Study Ephesians 4:2-8 to see how good God is to us despite the sins of our past.
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## 3. When it comes to kindness, we should follow the Golden Rule.

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- » The Golden Rule is a principle that Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount. The most familiar version of the Golden Rule says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
  - » Jesus gave some very wise and challenging instructions on how we are to love through kindness.
  - » Discuss Luke 6:27-35. Notice verse 31 is what has come to be known as the Golden Rule.
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## 4. Acts of kindness can be a great influence in bringing people back to God.

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- » We would all like to be more effective witnesses for Jesus Christ.
- » Although part of our calling is to bring people to the reality of their sin, the message that we have been commissioned to preach is called the Good News!
- » The Gospel is, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."*
- » It has been said, "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." For many, the thing that will draw them to God is the realization that God really does love and care about them.
- » According to Romans 2:4, what quality of God is it that leads us to repentance?
- » People will not care about *what you know* until they know *how much you care*.
- » Discuss the door that is opened for the hearing of the Gospel when we care about not only the spiritual needs, but also the physical needs of the people we meet (Romans 12:17-21; James 2:15,16, I John 3:16,17).

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# “LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS”

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## I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 11 ■ For week ending March 13, 2021

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In the Apostle Paul’s writing, we begin to discover *what love is* by understanding *what love is not*. How easy is it to find yourself feeling envious of someone’s accomplishments or possessions? When those feelings begin to raise their ugly head, we must recognize that this is not *agape love*. When we love someone, we will want what is best for them. We will rejoice in their accomplishments, and we will be glad when good things happen in their life.

**KEY TEXT:** *“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance”* (I Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT).

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### 1. Jealousy, also translated as envy, is a feeling of resentment toward others because of their possessions or good qualities.

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- » Jealous in Greek is *zēloō*, which means *to have warm of feeling for or against. It is to covet, to have desire or to move with envy.*
  - » All though the church at Corinth did operate with Spiritual Gifts, apparently there was a problem with carnality including jealousy between members (I Corinthians 3:3).
  - » The ministry is not a competition and jealousy has no place in the work of the Lord.
  - » Read and discuss James 3:13-17.
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### 2. Here are some good examples of jealousy and its impact on people in the Bible.

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- » Discuss the following examples and the destructive nature of jealousy.
  - » The first murder was motivated by jealousy (Genesis 4:1-9).
  - » Joseph’s ten older brothers sell him into slavery because of their jealousy (Genesis 37:3,4,9-11,18-28).
  - » King Saul became bitter toward David and on several occasions his jealousy drove him to try and kill him (I Samuel 18:7-11).
  - » King Saul’s son Jonathan stands in contrast to his father. Jonathan had every reason to become jealous of David but instead he loved him like a brother (I Samuel 18:1).
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### 3. Agape love is happy to see others do well and succeed.

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- » Since agape love is sacrificial and puts the needs of others before itself, it is the opposite of envy.
  - » This is a necessary quality in not only leadership, but in every member of God’s Church. We should take great joy in helping one another be successful.
  - » Examine the following passages: I Corinthians 12:22-27; I Corinthians 14:26; and Hebrews 10:24,25.
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### 4. Why does the Bible tell us that God is a jealous God if “God is love” and “love is not jealous” ?

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- » Deuteronomy 4:24 states emphatically, *“For the LORD thy God is...a jealous God.”*
- » Jealousy or zealousness over something or someone can have both a positive and negative meaning and motivation. Paul told the church in II Corinthians 11:2, *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* His use of the word *jealous* is used in a positive way to show the zeal he has to see the church be presented to Christ.
- » The same is true of God’s jealousy. He was not envious of the Israelites’ accomplishments or possessions, but was communicating His strong love for them. The Scriptures depict a marriage between God and His people (Jeremiah 3:14) and yet they had been unfaithful and played the harlot (Jeremiah 3:6-8). In a marriage, the two belong to one another. God’s jealousy or zeal is to love and protect what rightfully belongs to Him—His people.
- ▶ God’s righteous jealousy was based upon His love for Israel unlike the jealousy Paul is addressing in I Corinthians 13 which is selfish in nature.

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# “LOVE IS NOT BOASTFUL OR PROUD”

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I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 12 ■ For week ending March 20, 2021

Love presents itself with humility and genuine interest in the lives of others. This stands in contrast to those who have an exaggerated opinion of themselves and like to brag about their own accomplishments. The carnal nature of man likes to feed upon the recognition received from others. Some live their lives in pursuit of becoming someone they feel is important. When Jesus came, He was only motivated by love. He did not boast of who He was. He did not seek a reputation or a kingdom. He came to humbly serve and to lay down His life for us.

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**KEY TEXT:** “*Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude...*” (I Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT).

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## **1. The Greek word translated as *boastful* here means to brag or point to oneself.**

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- » It’s interesting to note that bragging is the flip side of envy. When we envy, we want what someone else has. When we brag, we are attempting to make people want what we have.
- » Paul, in writing about boasting, was addressing other problems in the Corinthian church.
- » For example, they touted their allegiance to different apostles, creating division within the church (chapters 1–3). They were critical of Paul (chapter 4). They boasted of their tolerance for immorality within the church (chapter 5). They sued each other in court (chapter 6). These and other arrogant actions are ultimately countered in chapter 13, with love as the proper corrective.
- » If any one could have boasted about his accomplishments it would have been Paul, but He chose not to (I Corinthians 9:16).
- » As a matter of fact, Paul even went as far as to say that we as believers can not even boast about our salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9). All glory must go to Jesus!

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## **2. We should follow the example of Jesus when it comes to living a humble life.**

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- » Jesus was love *personified*. Some would have liked to have crowned Him King right on the spot, but Jesus knew what He had come into this world to do. His mind was to humbly do what the Father had sent Him to do.
- » Discuss the mindset we are to have as followers of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:3-8).
- » When we have the mind of Christ, the love that we show will draw people to God (Matthew 5:16).

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## **3. The word *proud* in I Corinthians 13:4 comes from a Greek word that means to puff up or blow up.**

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- » This is what we are expressing today when we say that someone “has a big head.”
- » The term *puffed up* is used in the KJV in I Corinthians 8:1 concerning *knowledge*. Compare this passage with I Corinthians 13:2.
- » There are also warnings in the Scriptures about not becoming high-minded because of riches (I Timothy 6:17).
- » What did Paul say about this in Romans 12:16?

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## **4. God has a way of humbling the proud.**

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- » James 4:6 tells us, “*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*”
- » Pride is a sin. I John 2: 16 tells us that “*the pride of life*” is “*not of the Father.*”
- » When we are prideful, we are headed for a fall (Proverbs 16:18).
- » When King Nebuchadnezzar brags about his own greatness and accomplishments, God drives him from his kingdom and makes him eat grass like an ox for seven years.
- » Nebuchadnezzar’s response to God’s power is found in Daniel 4:34-37. What did he learn?
- » God does want to use each of us for His glory. The way to be used is to walk humbly before the Lord.
- » “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up*” (James 4:10).

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# “LOVE IS NOT RUDE”

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I CORINTHIANS 13 SERIES ■ Lesson 13 ■ For week ending March 27, 2021

Rudeness has become rampant in today's society. It is more important to many people to "be yourself" and just "tell it like it is" than to concern oneself with how words and actions impact others. This is not an example of agape love. Placing someone else's feelings before our own need to vent or express our opinions is what love looks like. In a world where it is so easy to share every fleeting thought through mediums such as social media, it becomes increasingly important that we measure our words carefully and think about how what we are saying (or sharing) will be perceived.

**KEY TEXT:** "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way.." (I Corinthians 13:4-7, NLT).

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## 1. Love does not insist on its own way! Doing so would be rude.

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- » "It's my way or the highway!" is the mantra of the prideful. This elevates us to a position of thinking that we are better than others, causing strife and contention in many relationships. Romans 12:3 gives good instruction about self-evaluation.
- » Getting "my way" becomes more important than making and experiencing peace. Allowing others to have their own way of thinking, problem-solving, and finding alternative ways to accomplish a goal is very freeing for both parties involved. The Bible gives us clear instruction about pursuing peace (Matthew 5:9; Romans 14:19; Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14).
- » A person practicing true love is willing to give up the right to always be right. Here's a practical application: Do you allow others to merge into your lane on the highway by giving them space or do you speed ahead to make sure that they don't get in your way? It isn't the greatest sacrifice, but it demonstrates patience and kindness. Rudeness gives away the fact that you *lack love* for other people. Love doesn't insist on its own way, instead it is considerate of others. See 1 Peter 3:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 10:24.

## 2. The word *rude* used in 1 Corinthians 13 is *aschemonei*, which means *behaving in an ugly, indecent, unseemly, or unbecoming manner*.

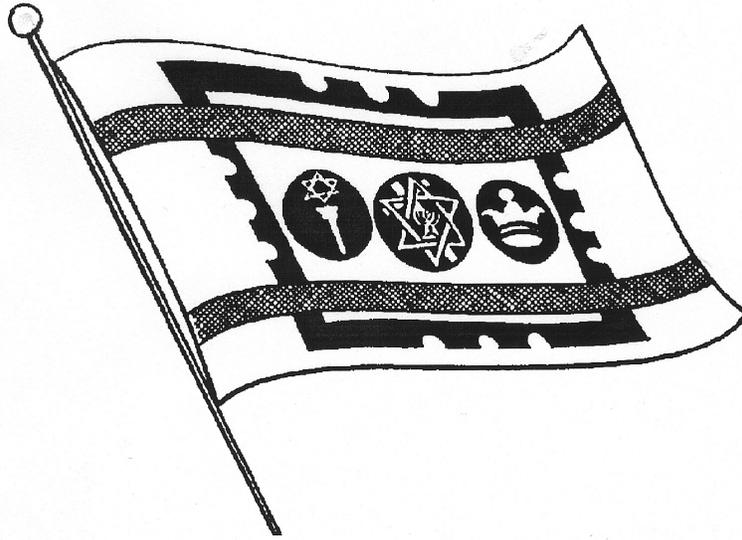
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- » Saying "Love is not rude," in essence, means that those who embody true, biblical love do not speak or act in a way that is indecent, offensive, or dishonorable to others.
- » Rudeness can be subtle. Ironically, oftentimes we hear before a rude remark, "Not to be rude, but..." A cutting word or sarcastic or condescending remark can do as much damage to a relationship as what we would recognize as out-right rude behavior. These words are spilled out without measure or discipline and without regard to how the receiver will be affected. We call this in modern terms "venting." Words are spewed without reservation like vomit in order to try to unburden ourselves. While we may feel better temporarily, we now have quite a mess to clean up. Discuss Proverbs 16:23-24 and Psalm 141:3.
- » Read Ephesians 4:29-32. Before you speak (or post online), is what you are saying edifying?

## 3. Our words matter.

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- » Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). We need to measure our words carefully before they leave our lips. This is what it means to be "*slow to speak*" (James 1:19).
- » Compare the contrast of rude behavior and speech to the beauty of a word spoken appropriately and at the right time (Proverbs 25:11). In light of the concept of reaping and sowing, read Proverbs 12:14.
- » Showing kindness and compassion in a rude world is a trait/sign of a true believer.
- » Jesus' words in John 13:35 seem easy enough to grasp, so why do we find this so difficult to live out?
- » Study 1 Corinthians 11:17-22,33-34. Notice how Paul addresses divisions and factions. They came to the Lord's Supper with their own interests in mind. They should have been breaking bread as one body, but they missed the entire point of this fellowship. Community, service, and love took a back seat to their own self-interests. We are reminded to keep the cross of Jesus Christ central, with love for others, remembrance of the Lord, and examination of ourselves as key elements of gathering together.



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