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## **THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP**

### **LESSON 2: A SUPREME LOVE**

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## WHAT SHOULD WE RETAIN?

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# PREFACE

My dear students,

this course on the way of discipleship is the third in the series of courses based on the first seven books of the “the Christian way series”, all authored by Doctor **Zacharias Tanee Fomum**. The titles are

**The way of life (course 1)**

**The way of obedience (course 2)**

**The way of discipleship (course 3)**

**The way of sanctification (course 4)**

**The way of Christian character (course 5)**

**The way of spiritual power (course 6)**

**The way of Christian service (course 7)**

The teachings of Doctor **Fomum** have profoundly influenced my life and my walk with the Lord, and I have the deep conviction that the children of God who will study this course 3 with an honest heart will never be the same in their relationship with God and with men. Before introducing the course, we will like to remind you that the Last commandment that the Lord Jesus gave to his Disciples before He went up was; **“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”**. (Matthew 20:19-20) by remembering this commandment of the Lord, we want to say that only disciples have a place in God’s heart. Many religious people are struggling to convert people and add to their system or denominations: but as for us, we insist on the fact that if these “converts” do not conform to the norms that the Lord set for anyone who wants to become and remain a disciple, they have no place in God’s heart. They have not been converted to the Lord Jesus but to the system or denominations to which they belong.

1. If you have not yet become a child of God, if you have not yet experienced the new birth in Christ, subscribe for our **COURSE 1** based on the way of life. It will certainly help you.

This course will be made up of six lessons, all treating the conditions to become and remain a disciple of the Lord Jesus. My prayer is that the Lord should enlighten the eyes of your heart as you study the course and that you should be moved to make the right choice, that of becoming and remaining a disciple.

# INTRODUCTION

The preliminary condition for becoming and remaining a disciple is to love as the Lord Jesus loved. The Lord Jesus loved His Father with a supreme love and manifested this love by an unconditional obedience that finally led Him to the cross to fulfill the will of the one He loved. In the same way, He loved His own (the children of God) and completed His love by giving His life for them. If the one who makes men Holy and those who are made holy are of the same family, (Hebrews 2:11) then the children of God must resemble Jesus who was the first-borne among many brothers in a particular way, they must love the Lord Jesus and the brethren with a supreme love.

## TOPIC 1: A SUPREME LOVE FOR THE LORD JESUS

Jesus must be loved as God. The Lord had said to the people of Israel: **“you shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that give you today are to be upon your heart. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands... write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)** Jesus wants us to love Him. He asked Simon Peter **“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?” (John 21:16)**. He has set conditions that those who love Him must fulfill. Love for the Lord cannot be manifested simply by words no matter how good they are. This love must be practical: we will discuss two main ways of manifesting love for the Lord Jesus.

### 1. LOVE MANIFESTED BY PROXIMITY TO HIM

#### 1.1. LOVE MANIFESTED IN HUMBLE PROXIMITY TO THE LORD

In an irresistible way, love draws a person close to the one he loves and true love commands the respect of the beloved person. One of the grandest love stories of all times is enshrined in the pages of the Bible. It is the love of Mary the sister of Martha for the Lord Jesus. As we look at that story, let us learn afresh from her example and by his response to her, what it means to love Him (the Lord

Mary was humble; she had a constant position at the feet of Jesus. The Bible says **“she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching” (Luke 10:39)**. Then **“when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “lord if you had been here, my Brother would not have died” (John 11:20-21)** next, it was Mary’s turn. The Bible says **“then Mary, when she came to where Jesus was and saw Him, fell at His feet saying to Him” Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died (John 11:32)** Martha stood and spoke to Him. Mary fell at His feet before speaking to Him. They both said the same thing, but they said it from two different positions. Mary said it falling at the feet of Jesus.

Martha fed Jesus with the facts about the brother’s death, but Mary communicated love from the feet of Jesus. Jesus heard Martha simply, but when Mary spoke, the reaction was different. The Bible says **“Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in Spirit and troubled and He said, “Where have you laid him?” they said “Lord, come and see” Jesus wept (John 11:33-35)** her love and her tears moved Jesus to tears. It must have been tears of love. Her love reached out to Jesus

as the love of others did not. Her love drew tears from Him. Have your love ever touched the heart of Jesus in that kind of way?

It did not end there. She continued to love Jesus in a very humble way. When she had an occasion to anoint Jesus, the Bible says: **“Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment” (John 12:3)**. The feet represents the lowest and dirtiest part of a man, that part that is most in contact with dirt. The hair of a woman is her most precious part, her very glory. Mary was saying to Jesus, “Lord, I love you. Even the dust on your feet outweighs me utterly. My hair is my glory but my glory is nothing. It only has meaning if it is used to wipe your feet. Again we see her at the feet of Jesus, not sitting, but prostrate, using her hair as a towel she truly loved Him something of the fragrance of her love went through the heart of Jesus. The Bible says, **“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5)**. Martha and Lazarus are mentioned by name but Mary’s name is not mentioned. Why is it so? I think that it is because the love that Jesus had for Mary, in response to her own love for Him, was so special that there was no need putting it into words. Deepest love is felt and communicated, often with feelings too deep for words. Jesus responded to her love in a way that He did not respond to the love of others-with tears and then He gave her a permanent position at His feet. **“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things: one thing is needful Mary has chosen the good portion which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42)**.

One thing is needful and one thing is needful in every life-a supreme love for the Lord Jesus. That love must be manifested in humble proximity to Him, near Him, at His feet. True love for the Lord is the Love that comes from a humble heart. That is to say from a heart that accepts Jesus as He is, and we know that Jesus is Lord, He is the Lord of lords.

This means that, even if I am a lord, I will never be a lord over the Lord of lords. All sincere love towards God can only come from a heart that accepts with delight to be a slave and behave as a slave of the King of kings. Many people proclaim their love for the Lord with their simple words, whereas in reality, their hearts are far from the Lord. Some people are so “familiar” with the Lord that they treat Him like Martha who was even blaming Him. Some of such people expose the state of their hearts towards the Lord by the way they talk to Him during their prayers. Some of them are so haughty that they even pray lying on their beds, well wrapped in their blankets such people are the Lords and Jesus is their slave. They could give pretext that it is cold, or they give a handful of other reasons. But the truth remains that their attitude reflects the state of their hearts towards God. They are not humble and as a result, they cannot really love God. They are far from God. The truth is that even those ones who manifest a certain familiarity with God are very far from God; there is no deep communion between them and the Lord of glory. For those who really draw near the Holy God cannot help stand on their two legs. The Holiness of God strikes them to the point that they would only fall at the feet of the Lord, as Mary did. The Lord will accept only the love of those who are humble for they are the ones who love as we should love.

## **1.2. LOVE MANIFESTED THROUGH COMMUNION WITH GOD**

Main was created to be in communion with God that is to love God; for without love there is no true communion with we love a person we irresistibly manifest the need to be always be in the presence we love and to fellowship with him. There is a law of love that is none as the law of irresistibly attraction to the

loved person. Those who truly love the Lord know this law. They are always seeking for the opportunity to be with the Lord they are always seeking for the opportunity to be alone with the Lord to kneel down at His feet, listen to Him and talk to Him. Do you love the Lord? Is your love for him always manifested by this constant desire to be with Him? If not, that love of yours for Him is defective. We know that a person is not often at ease in the presence of someone he does not love. That is why those who do not love God find prayer boring. Some people often violently prolong the moments that they spend with God in prayer, but truly one does not need to struggle to pray to God that one loves. And those who are always forcing themselves to meet God are by so doing express the fact that they don't love God. They fulfill the formality of prayer without praying. In effect, only those who love God can truly pray because prayer is heart-to-heart communion with God. In this sense, to love is to pray and to pray is to love. When the disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray, He answered them **“and when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. This, then, is how you should pray: our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”** (Matthew 6:7-13)

This prayer is the model prayer of love for the Lord. It can be done honestly, only by a heart that loves the Lord with a sincere love. Only disciples can honestly pray such a prayer, and any prayer that does not conform to the spirit of this model prayer, cannot establish a real communion between the Lord and the one who prays. But we say it again that those who love the Lord Jesus seek for communion with Him, and without communion, there is no true love, and every disciple bears the Mark of his love for the Master.

## **2. LOVE MANIFESTED IN OBEDIENCE TO HIM**

### **2.1. OBEDIENCE TO THE WRITTEN WORD**

In the preface of lesson 1 on “The way of life”, we said that the Bible is God's only letter to humanity and that it carries all that can be known of God in His relationship with Man. When we love someone, we obey him whether the person is physically present or not. We love the words of the person, we love his letters, we read them, and we satisfy the person's desires, commands and demands. Whether the loved person knows it or not, the one who loves finds his pleasure and his happiness in walking according to the desires, commands and demands for the one he loves.

The Lord Jesus calls on those who love Him to manifest this by obeying Him. He said and, He is still says **“if your love me, keep my commandments”** (John 14:15) **“now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them”** (John 13:17). **“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it”** (Luke 11:28)

There are some things that should be done concerning obedience. Jesus obeyed as our supreme example. The Bible talks of Jesus learning obedience: **he learnt obedience by the things He suffered** (Hebrews 5:8) Jesus obeyed God in all things. He obeyed God in the most costly way; by the way of death on the cross. The Lord cannot demand from us something that He Himself was unwilling to do.

God sometimes demands very costly obedience. He said to Abraham: **“Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about”** (Genesis 22:2). It was a simple commandment. It was clear, it concerned his beloved Isaac. Abraham could have said: **“no, it's too much”** he could have said: **“this obedience will frustrate**

**God's goals. I will help God to accomplish His purpose by sparing Isaac".** But he did not do that. He went straight on the pathway of obedience and won the heart of God. There is an Isaac in every life, in your life, you too will come to the point of blessing when you take that thing or person that you cherish so much and sacrifice him or it in obedience to the Lord.

God always demands total obedience. He asked King Saul to destroy the Amalekites completely. His instructions were very clear (and His instructions are always very clear) for He said, **"Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman; infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:3).** Saul did not obey completely. The Bible says, **"But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed" (1 Samuel 15:8-9).** God had said, **"Utterly destroy all".** Saul heard that command clearly. He was faced with a choice between obeying God completely or not. He chose his own way and destroyed what he chose to destroy and left what he wanted to leave. One may say that he was partially obedient but God did not consider it so. Before God, he was disobedient and the Lord disqualified him. He had religious motives for his disobedience but that did not make any difference before God. He stood before God in the same position as someone who would say to God, "God, I will not obey you at all." The partially obedient and the complete disobedient are one before God He knows nothing as partial obedience. His verdict on Saul shows clearly that before Him only one thing counts complete obedience. It was said of Saul, **"I repent that I have made Saul king; for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments" (1 Samuel 15:11)** and the following sentence was passed on him. **"Has the Lord had great delight as in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams? For rebellion, is as the sin of divination and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22-23).**

There is a note of finality about it. With God there is no midway. Those who are not completely obedient are disobedient. "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). If you are going to go on with the Lord, settle in your mind and heart that you are going to render Him perfect obedience. If not, don't bother at all. You will never become a disciple. There is no room what so ever for disobedient disciples.

God sometimes demands unpopular obedience. The Lord will sometimes call those who want to come after Him to unpopular obedience. He called the prophet Isaiah to walk naked for three years (Isaiah 20:1-3). He obeyed. He must have looked like a mad man to all around but he knew God that God had spoken and he had only one thing to do - obey. And no wonder he went so far with God!

On another occasion, Moses was dealing with the children of Israel after they had made the golden calf. He asked, "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me". And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put every man his sword on his side, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. "And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. And Moses said, "Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day" (Exodus 32:26-29).

It was very unpopular obedience. They had to kill their children, brothers and neighbours. They must have appeared as very wicked, devoid of natural affection but God had so commanded them and His commands are perfect. The tribe of Levi obeyed and by that act ordained themselves for the service of the Lord. Only the obedient can be called upon to serve Him. Before others may ordain a person to minister in the name of the

Lord, the person must first ordain himself through unpopular obedience. Only such can serve the Lord in an intimate way.

God always demands continuous obedience. People are called upon to choose whether or not they want to serve the Lord. When they do choose to serve Him, He will demand service from them continuously. He is not interested in those who, in a moment of joy offer to serve Him but afterwards do not continue. Obedience to Him must be continuous. Those who accept to obey Him must obey Him every minute, every day, until He comes again. Discipleship is a school in which the lovers of the Lord enrol and never graduate until they see Jesus face to face at His appearing. If you do not plan to obey right to the end, don't bother at all to begin. Count the cost! The Lord said that those who laid their hands to the plough and looked back were unfit for the kingdom. Are you fit for the kingdom?

## 2.2. OBEDIENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the written word of God was written. It is still the Holy Spirit that can help us to understand the written word of God. But apart from the written word, God can speak to His children through the Holy Spirit, and they know when their father speaks. When the Lord speaks, He expects us to obey Him. This means total obedience to the slightest prompting of the Holy Spirit in us. The Lord made the following promises. **“But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, says the Lord, I will put my laws within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they will be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).**

Those who walk close to the Lord instinctively know what He wants them to do. It will often have to do with things against which there is no law but those who walk with Him will know that He has not given them permission to so act. They will discover that although other believers can do some things, they cannot do the same things and maintain their peace with Him. Such obedience is most costly because often it will offend others but what can the obedient servant do but to obey? Something that is even more poignant about it is that the Holy Spirit may give you no liberty to explain the reasons for your action to others and this will on some occasions make you look cheap and irrational, but the obedient have no choice but to obey and bear the accompanying reproach. But many people do not obey and the problem is not that God's children don't know when God has spoken and when God has not spoken, as some will pretend to say. The problem is at the level of the lack of commitment to the will of God. But for those who truly want to know when the Holy Spirit speaks and what he says, we want to say that these things are learnt along the way as we walk with the Lord. Nevertheless we know that any act which does not come with conviction is sin (**Romans 14:23**). In other words whatever we undertake against our conscience is sin. The Lord Jesus has given us His peace. He said **“my peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives (John 14:27)**. Anything that comes to take away or trouble this peace that the Lord has given us, is supposed to be considered with much suspicion. Whatever comes from the Lord is also accompanied by the peace of the Lord, for our Lord is the Lord of peace.

Obedience is a condition for abiding in His love and for being His friends. The Lord said, "If you keep my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandment and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Again He said, "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).

So, a lot depends on obedience. There is a choice before each one. The question comes to you, "Do you want a supreme love for Jesus? Do you have a supreme love for Him?" You can discover the answer easily. Just

ask yourself, "Is there any area in my private or public life that is not obedient to Him?" If there is and you continue to maintain it, then you cannot be His disciple. If you are prepared to obey Him at any cost, then the first step to the way of discipleship is opened to you. May God help you to go beyond the first step.

## **Topic 2: A SUPREME LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN**

### **1. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST**

Those who love the Lord Jesus will take pleasure in loving all whom He loves. The object of the Lord's special love is the Church. The Bible says, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish".(Ephesians 5:26-27). The Lord's love for the church was purposeful. It aimed at sanctifying her and enabling her to be presented in splendour, without spot (without sin), without wrinkle (loss of zeal and love because of age), without blemish (spot from contacts with the world).

In order to accomplish this purpose, Christ gave Himself up for the church. I am particularly touched by the word "up". He did not just give Himself for the church, He gave Himself up. In other words, He gave Himself away; He sacrificed Himself. He gave Himself away that He might have the church. Without that sacrifice, there would have been no church.

### **2. THE COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST**

The Lord gave the disciples many commandments but there was one which He called "a new commandment". Before He could give the new commandment, He allowed the traitor Judas to leave the rest. In fact, Judas could not participate in the new commandment since he was of the world, but this commandment was meant for the children of God. When he left, Jesus then introduces the new commandment. Why a new commandment? This was a new because there was an old commandment of love. To all humanity, God had said, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). This is the old commandment of love. Then the Lord gave a new commandment to His Body. He said to them: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). So pressing was this command on the heart of the Lord that He did not hesitate to give the command again saying, "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:12-14). The Lord Jesus was saying, "I manifested my love for you by laying down my life for you. You are to love each other that way. My love for you is the yardstick by which you will measure your love for each other". We need not ask, "How did Jesus love the disciples and give Himself for them?" First of all He loved them even while they were His enemies. Secondly, He gave Himself up to purchase them at a time when they had nothing to give Him. Thirdly, He loved them even when they said that they did not know Him. Fourthly, He held nothing back from them. He gave His all. Fifthly, His love conquered and made them into what they should be.

### **3. THE COMMANDMENT REINFORCED**

The commandment of Christ to the church to love as Christ had loved was reinforced by the writers of the New Testament. The apostle of love wrote: "By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother" (1 John

3:10). "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

The apostle to the circumcision wrote saying, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of the imperishable through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:22-23) and the apostle to the Gentiles wrote "Above all these put on love, which binds everything together" (Colossians 3:14).

Everyone who wants to become a disciple and continue as one must love all who confess that Jesus is their Lord. The disciple does not need to agree with all who are truly born again in everything but he must love them. He loves them not because they have believed what they ought to believe and practise everything that they ought to practise but because all believers belong to the Lord and the Lord loves each one of them. The disciple loves all believers because he is a learner from the Lord Jesus who loves all of them.

The Lord died for the disciple unconditionally. The disciple must love all who belong to the Lord unconditionally. They may be ignorant, deceived and rebellious but the disciple is to love them.

#### **4. THE BELIEVER'S LOVE AND SPIRITUAL CONFLICT TO THE WORLD**

We know that there are two Kingdoms; God's Kingdom and the devil's kingdom. There is equally a perpetual conflict between the two Kingdoms, and the conflicts will end only when the Lord Jesus Christ on His return, will totally bring to nought all the army of His enemy, the devil and cast Him and His entire army into the lake of fire and sulphur (hell). All human beings are, consciously or unconsciously involved in this two universal conflict. No one is neutral. Either you are fighting for God and with God, or you are fighting for Satan and with Satan. All that a man is and all that a man does has an impact on the kingdom of God or on the kingdom of the devil. No attitude is neutral, no word is neutral, and no act is neutral. The Lord said; **the one who is not with me is against me and he who does not gather with me scatters (Matthew 12:30)**

When we consider relationships among children of God, we notice that reality, in this spiritual conflict; the most dreadful enemies of the Lord are the devil and his host, (for the Lord has already overcome Satan;) but those children of God who behave as traitors, by their attitude, words and their other acts towards some of their brothers. The absence of true love that a brother could manifest towards some brethren is a weapon forged against the Lord and His army, against God and the Kingdom of God.

When a brother nourishes hatred against another brother, be it from the same assembly or not, this hatred is a sword given to Satan to fight against the lord. Jealousy, backbiting, gossips and criticism against the brethren are all weapons used by the children of God to help the devil to fight against their brethren and their Lord. If there are such things in your life, they indicate that you don't have true love for the brethren. And such things disqualify you. Anybody who calls himself a believer and is fighting against the children of God, thus against God, cannot be a disciple of the lord. He is like Judas who was among the disciples but was committed neither to the Lord nor the other disciples. This love that the Lord talked and with which we should love the brethren is not a simple feeling. It is a lasting commitment to all whom the Lord Jesus has redeemed and who are children of God. This commitment is produced by the consciousness of belonging to the same Father, the same kingdom. It is this love that covers multitude of sins. When we love someone truly, we don't expose his errors. On the contrary we seek to cover them. The Lord Jesus said "as I have loved you, you also love one another." We don't see anywhere in the Bible where the Lord Jesus exposes the faults of His disciples, whereas the Lord outlines the faults of the Pharisees and Scribe several times. The disciple of Jesus is the one who for no reason whatsoever will expose the faults of his brother to other people. But how many of God's children speak evil of others in their absence. It is because of those things that the name of the Lord is blasphemed by His enemies. The disciple is the one who avoids even to murmur against the brethren or to despise them or judge

them in his heart. For these secret sins are not less serious than the others. Like God, Satan also reads our hearts and is strengthened and encouraged by these sins that he sees of the children of his enemy.

Strives between brothers even if they appear to be harmless, are in the final analysis the most disastrous but who can withstand brotherly love? Even Satan and his entire army in their best days cannot succeed to overcome true love among brothers in the Lord Jesus. It is a love that does not seek self interest but the interest of the others. It is a love that does not suspect evil, it is a love that forgives all, it is a love that prays for the weak brethren and that believes that God will make them stand firm. It is active love there is no place for passivity nor for indifference for we have said that there is no neutral ground. From this point of view, the one who does not love obviously hates. That is what the Lord means when he says **"He who is not with me is against me and he who does not gather with me scatters"** (Matthew 12:30). The one who does not love his brother as the Lord loved him is not gathering with the Lord. He is, by that act, against the Lord. It is only those who gather with the Lord that are his disciples. This condition imposes on all who want to be his disciples, the necessity to see God's children as the Lord sees them, to carry them in their heart as the Lord carries them in his heart, and to intercede for those who falter as the Lord himself intercedes for them.

## 5. SEPARATION AND FELLOWSHIP

The Lord asked that the disciples would love each other. He did not say that the disciple would fellowship with each other always. The disciple cannot approve the godless, questionable or unbiblical practices of those brethren who although genuine in their conversion are nevertheless bound by worldly or religious systems or who love in overt sin. The disciple must separate from such. The Bible says, **"When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of the Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"** (1 Corinthians 5:3-5). **"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men; not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But rather I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber - not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outside? Is not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. Drive out the wicked person from among you"** (1 Corinthians 5:9-13). **"And one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work"** (2 John 9-10).

Even when we are forced to be separated from believers, either because of their sins or false doctrine, we still have a duty to love them and give ourselves away for their good. This will be, loving them. This ministry of laying down ourselves for the brethren will lead us to fast and pray for them until they can be presented to the Bridegroom without spot or wrinkle. Love will also lead to an enormous capacity to forgive them even when they have hurt us most deeply and treat them as if they never hurt us at all. This is costly but love spares not the best.

## 6. LOVE AND THE BELIEVER'S TESTIMONY TO THE WORLD

The Lord said, **"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"** (John 13:35). The believers do not need to love each other as a testimony to the Lord. The Lord knows them without needing such evidence. However, there is a watching world and it watches in a critical sense. The world is devoid of love, yet it yearns for it and needs it. Therefore when believers love each other, they present to the world something so different from what it has that it is bound to attract notice. The world cannot ignore or resist a community of people who love each other. That is what the church is called to be to the world. If there is one believer whom you do not love, the world will not know you as a disciple of the Lord Jesus even though you

may be one. Settle it in your heart that you will love all the brethren as the Lord loves them. It does not matter whether or not they love you. You love them. Even if they hate you, you should love them.

## **WHAT NEEDS TO BE RETAINED**

The Lord Jesus said “I have given them your word; the world hated them because they are not of the world as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). The true children of God, that is, those who keep the word of God, are hated by world and can only find consolation in the love of their father or that of their brethren. And who can say he does not need love? Even God needs love and that is why He commanded that we should love Him. The one who does not need love is greater than God. Such a person does not exist. This love is first of all to have a positive heart attitude towards all whom the Lord has received (all the children of God). Then it consists of an unconditional commitment to the people of God, a commitment that will cause the disciple to identify himself at all times to God’s people in good days as in bad days, in times of peace as in times of persecution. The Bible says “By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ, as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward (Hebrews 11:26-26). Some people, for fear of persecution deny before unbelievers, some brethren whom they know to be children of God. Such people are cowards and we know that no coward can be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Those who betray the brethren in order to protect their selfish interest are not disciples. The disciples must love the brethren as the Lord loved them and gave His life for them.

Even though the disciple’s love must first of all be directed to God, our conclusion is centred more on the supreme Love for the brethren, partly because it seems very much easier to love men to say they love God, for love for God is not always sincere. If someone says: “I love God” yet hates his brother, he is a liar for anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must love his brother (John 4:24-25). In a sense, our love for God can in reality only be measured by the degree or the intensity of our love for God’s children. Even at the human level when you love somebody with true love, you will necessarily love the children of that person. Furthermore, love that comes from the same heart cannot have two colours or two natures, such that those who don’t love God will also not love God’s children. Those who love God with a supreme love will also love God’s children with a supreme love. The truth is that all true children of God have the capacity to love supremely, because God has poured out his into their hearts. The Bible says: “dear friends, let us love one another; for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love” (1John 4:7-8). We have said that this love is not just feelings. It is more than that, and every true Child of God will love if he wants to love. It is each one that decides the degree of love that he will give to God and to his children. But if you want to be a disciple of the Lord, you must love the Lord with a supreme love and you must love the brethren with a supreme love. Start by repenting of your past that was characterised by a lack of love for the Lord and lack of love for the brethren.

May the Lord bless you.

In lesson 3 we will treat the second condition for being a disciple.

## **“TOTAL SEPARATION”**

# QUESTIONNAIRES

## SECTION 1

1. Which commandment did the lord gave to his disciples before he was taken up to heaven?
2. What is the greatest commandment? (bible backing)
3. Which is the second greatest commandment which is like the one above? (bible backing)
4. What do these two commandments have in common?
5. How did Jesus obey the first commandment? (bible backing)
6. How did Jesus obey the second commandment? (bible reference)
7. Can someone who is not born of God love? Justify your answer.
8. Anyone who is born of God will obviously love. Why?
9. Give in two (2) major points how the supreme love for the lord is manifested.
  1. ...
  2. ...
10. Give two major points to show how the closeness to the lord should be manifested.
  1. ....
  2. ....
11. Which one did Mary chose?
12. When Lazarus died, the lord arrived. Mary's behavior was different from Martha's in two points. What are the points?
  1. ...
  2. ...
13. How did God also prove his love for this world?
14. How did Mary her love for Jesus?
15. What precious thing have you already given to the lord?
16. What is the difference between a love gift and the other gifts?
17. How was Mary's humility manifested?
18. Can those who do not love the lord really pray?

## SECTION 2

19. Do you have in your heart the assurance of God's love for you?
20. How can somebody's love for a superior person be tested?
21. How can we, following these criteria know that somebody loves the lord in a supreme way?
22. Sight a person from the Old Testament who passed this test. (bible reference)
23. What was that person's reward?
24. Name a person in the Old Testament who failed this test. (bible reference)
25. What punishment did God inflict on that person?
26. To what does God compare disobedience?
27. According to these criteria, does the Holy Spirit bear witness in your spirit that you love the lord in a supreme way?
28. Is there a commandment of the lord that you are still resisting to obey? If yes, which one?
29. Are you resisting the Holy Spirit in your heart about something that he has ordered you to do?
30. Are you resisting the Holy Spirit about a sin or something that He has asked you to stop? Which one?

31. Do you think a sorcerer or diviner who has not repented can enter the kingdom of God?
32. To whom does God liken a person who disobeys him? (c/o question 26)
33. Are you a diviner or a sorcerer?
34. If yes do you think you can enter the kingdom in this condition? Do you want to remedy the situation?

### SECTION 3

35. Why does the Lord say that the commandment to love is a new commandment?
36. How is this new commandment different from the former (Old) one?
37. What is the measure of the new commandment?
38. How did the Lord love us?
39. How did the Lord love his disciples?
  1. .
  2. .
  3. .
  4. .
  5. .
40. Is there a person (a child of God) that you love the way Jesus loved his disciples?
41. On what condition should a disciple love those who belong to the Lord?
42. Is love for the brethren synonymous to tolerance? Why?  
.....
43. What attitude should the disciples adopt towards other believers who are in error?
44. Is brotherly fellowship a communion in spirit or physical association? (bible reference)
45. What attitude should a believer adopt towards believers who are living in sin?
46. Can you love God when you don't love the children of God?
47. According to your answer, what then is the measure of our love for God?
48. What reproach did the Lord make on Saul of Tarsus when he visited him on his way to Damascus?
49. What should we deduce from the above with respect to spiritual conflict?
50. Are there neutral words?
51. What are the two opposing kingdoms built by words?
52. What then are the consequences of negative words that the children of God pronounce against their brothers?
53. Do you need to repent of your attitude towards some children of God? Which ones?  
....
54. Why don't you repent now?
55. In which way can the practice of the new commandment be a testimony to the world?