

coming and his ministry, death, resurrection and ascension there was a New Deal for the human race. For all who received the New Deal of God's grace in Jesus Christ, love had been redefined by a new principle.

**Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** Gal. 6:2

Though it has been present ever since Christ came and revealed it, this love has a newness which always seems to be taking us on to new ground and creating a new situation. This new deal is the real deal!

**Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.** 1 John 2:7-8

### Overflowing love

Sadly many fail to see the connection between the way Jesus has loved them and the way they are to love others. Jesus told a story of a man who had been forgiven hundreds of millions of dollars who immediately went out and in great anger had his fellow servant thrown into prison for not paying him the equivalent of a day's wages (Matt 18:21-35).

The true believer has been constrained, gripped, and controlled by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14,15). Our whole life as a Christ-one is to be an overflow of gratitude to God for his astounding generosity to us. We express this gratitude through astounding generosity poured out in love for those for whom Christ died.

**In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.**  
1 John 4:10-12

We freely give out of the abundance of the grace we have freely received.

**And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay** (or 'freely have you received, freely give').  
Matthew 10:7-8

In the next study we will see that this love extends even to our enemies!

**Rod James**  
March 2014

Permission is given to copy in this form. Quotations are from the English Standard Version.

## Five Commandments to Love

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Here are five commandments we find in the New Testament. These five commandments to love interrelate and instruct one another, and the believer will delight to meditate upon them and obey them.

1. **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** Deuteronomy 6:5
2. **You shall love your neighbour as yourself.**
3. **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.** John 13:34
4. **But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, [28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.** Luke 6:27-28
5. **Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.** 1 John 3:18

### STUDY THREE

#### A new commandment

**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** John 13:34-35

This commandment is new because no one has ever loved us as Jesus has.

**"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.** John 15:12-14

Jesus' death for us is the measure of his love for us. It was not just that he sacrifice his life for us, as perhaps a brave soldier does. Rather,

**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**  
1 Peter 2:24

#### The love of Christ for you

The key to understanding this love which we are commanded to have is 'as I have loved you'. The love we are to have for one another is the same as the love with which Christ has loved and does love us.

Spurgeon pondered this love in the following way.

It was a lingering death, but love survived the torment;  
a shameful death, but love despised the shame;  
a penal death, but love bore our iniquities;  
a forsaken, lonely death, from which the eternal Father hid his face, but love endured the curse, and gloried over all.  
Never such love, never such death. It was a desperate duel, but love bore the palm.

Charles Spurgeon

This love is not just a love for the human race as a whole. In loving us Christ knowingly loves each of us as though there were only one of us. It is helpful, in coming to realise Christ's love for you, to personalise the Scriptures that speak of that love. So let us change 'we' and 'us' to 'I' and 'me'.

**...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for me.** Mark 10:45

**By this I know love, that he laid down his life for me** 1 John 3:16

**Christ redeemed me from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for me.** Galatians 3:13

**For while I was still weak, at the right time Christ died for ungodly me.** Romans 5:6

**He himself bore my sins in his body on the tree, that I might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds I have been healed.** 1 Peter 2:24

**...he gave himself for my sins to deliver me from the present evil age,** Galatians 1:4

**...my great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for me to redeem me from all lawlessness and to purify me for himself, a person for his own possession who is zealous for good works.** Titus 2:13-14

**Christ loved me and gave himself up for me, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** Ephesians 5:2

**Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?** Romans 8:35

**...in all these things I am more than a conqueror through him who loved me.** Romans 8:37

**And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.** Galatians 2:20

It is, then, by Jesus' sacrificial death for us that we know what real love looks like.

**For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Romans 5:7-8

## **Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another**

The words 'just as' make it clear that our love for one another is to be of the very same stuff as Jesus' love for us. There will, therefore, be deep sacrifice in obeying Jesus' new commandment, for Jesus calls and commands us to come die with him (2 Corinthians 1:5, Philippians 3:10)

**By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.** 1 John 3:16

Being 'crucified with Christ' (Galatians 2:20) we are to rise to a new way of living; that is, living out the love of Christ.

## **Bearing sins**

When Peter says that 'he himself bore our sins in his body' (1 Peter 2:4) the word 'bore' is worthy of reflection. It is used in the Greek Old Testament for bearing an offering up to the altar. Lenski comments on this verse in 1 Peter, 'We see Christ on his way to Golgotha, his body loaded with all our sins, bruised, broken, suffering, to die the bloody death on the cross'.

While Jesus' sin-bearing work of love cannot be repeated or added to, it is true that for us to love one another 'just as' Jesus has loved us does involve us bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). The bearing of another's burdens includes their burden of sin. We can either get in under and lift it or swing on it! Love, says Paul, 'does not rejoice at wrongdoing' (1 Corinthians 13:6), e.g. by drawing people's attention to, or overstating, the wrongs of another. Rather, love labours to minimise the burden of another's sin.

**Hatred stirs up strife,  
but love covers all offenses.** Proverbs 10:12

**...whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.** James 5:20

## **The New Deal**

The US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt came to office in 1933 when the United States of America was in the midst of the Great Depression. He instituted a set of recovery policies and acts of parliament which were called 'The New Deal'.

When Jesus announced the coming kingdom of God, his teaching (e.g. in the Sermon on the Mount) did not merely give helpful tips for good living. He was announcing what 'the New Deal' of the Kingdom was. In Jesus'