

OTHERS

(Living Life For Others)

"Love one
another."
John 13:34

Bill Loveless
Christ Is Life Ministries

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Growing Up - Growing Out - Growing Deep

I have written a four-part series based on what I believe is our calling as Christians:

"We are called to grow into Christ-likeness and experience our true identity in order to live life for others and experience a deep relationship with God."

The series is called: ***Growing Up–Growing Out–Growing Deep***. Below is an overview of the study.

Growing UP – What it means to grow into Christ-likeness and to experience your true identity.

Book One - Growing Into Christ-Likeness

Book Two - Experiencing Your True Identity

Growing OUT – The overflow of Christ-likeness through you to selflessly live your life for others.

Book Three - Living Life For Others

Growing DEEP – Understanding the depth of God's love for you and how to experience a deeper relationship with Him.

Book Four - Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God

This booklet, **OTHERS**, is a summary of **Book Three– *Living Life For Others***. I hope that, as a result of what the Holy Spirit reveals to you in this booklet, you will continue on by going through Book Three.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Your Six Square Feet	5
----------------------------	---

Chapter Two

God Has Prepared Works For You For Others	8
---	---

Chapter Three

Why Me?	12
---------------	----

Chapter Four

Seeing Others Through The Eyes of Christ	17
--	----

Chapter Five

The Ultimate Objective of Seeing Others Through The Eyes of Christ	26
--	----

Chapter Six

Final Key Truths In Living For Others In Your Six Square Feet	34
---	----

CHAPTER ONE

Your Six Square Feet

Definition of Growing Out

“Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

*¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. **As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”***

Ephesians 4:15-16

In the first part of verse 15, as we studied in Book One, we are growing more like Christ. However, as we read in verse 16, as we grow into Christ-likeness, we will experience a greater selflessness and a greater desire to become others' focused. The result will be according to verse 16:

- You have works the Lord wants to accomplish through you for others.
- The overflow of these works is to help others grow up.
- The result will be a healthy body of Christ.
- The overflow of growing out will be Christ's love for others.

Therefore, growing out is the result of:

Depending on Christ as your Source to accomplish the WORKS He has prepared for you in order to HELP others grow spiritually in order to become SPIRITUALLY healthy and to LOVE others.

Where do we start in understanding how we grow out?

Each of Us Has Six Square Feet?

In order to live life for others, God has given each of us “six square feet.” The idea of “six square feet” is based on the strategy of how the Romans conquered the world. The strategy was to convince each Roman soldier that all he had to do was conquer his own six square feet and depend on his fellow soldiers to the right, to the left, in front of, and behind him to conquer their six square feet, they would conquer all of their enemies. And history proved that out. In like manner, God has given each of us a “spiritual” six square feet. This is how we define it.

***ANYONE the Lord brings into our lives so
that THROUGH us He can ACCOMPLISH
His DIVINE purposes.***

Your six square feet can be as close as a loved one, or perhaps a perfect stranger like the checker at your grocery store or a person on the phone from a foreign country struggling to speak English trying to help you with your credit card bill. Every person in your life, and those whom God brings into your life, make up your “six square feet.”

Every One Who Comes Into Your Six Square Feet Is A DIVINE Opportunity

*“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, **making the most of the opportunity.**” Colossians 4:5*

Look at Jesus’ journey while on earth. Everyone who came into Jesus’ life was a divine opportunity. This does not mean that all people responded positively – for one, the Pharisees actually hated Him. However, whomever He was with, He always saw as a divine encounter. Therefore,

remember this concerning those who come into your six square feet today:

With God there are NO accidents.

Only DIVINE appointments.

How Willing Are You To Minister To Those In Your Six Square Feet? Font change

*“so that you **will** walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:10*

Ask yourself this question: How willing am I to encourage others, share truth with others, or come alongside a hurting person? Our willingness to minister to others is dependent on how deeply we have been transformed into Christ-likeness and our true identity. The deeper the transformation the greater the willingness to be used by the Lord in others' lives.

CHAPTER TWO

God Has Prepared Works For You For Others

Good Works For You In Your Six Square Feet

It is important to know that God has prepared works for each one of us. We see this in Ephesians 2:10:

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**”*

How do we define “good works?”

ALL the ETERNAL works that God has prepared for you in ETERNITY PAST and wants to accomplish THROUGH you and NO ONE else.

Think about this for a moment. God values you so much that as you live dependent on Him, He will accomplish these eternal “good works” through you – works that He has prepared for you and no one else but you. Let these words sink into your heart for a moment: **“For you and no one else but you.”**

Why is that? Because of His great love for you and because of how much He values your life. We know God can do these works apart from us, but one of His greatest desires is for you and me to participate with Him in being His vessels of love, hope, encouragement, and Life to others. What an amazing divine privilege we have to be used by God in this way in another person’s life. We will see the result in the next section.

What Is A GOOD Work?

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10*

This verse confirms we are to do good works. What is the meaning of a “good work?”

GOOD WORK

Any work that ORIGINATES from God and is done BY Him THROUGH you.

Paul highlights this in Romans 5:18.

*“For I will not presume to speak of anything except what **Christ has accomplished through me**, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed.”*

As tools in God’s hands, He has prepared works that He wants to do through us for others. These are works specifically designed for you and no one else. It is important to understand that these works were prepared in eternity past which means you don’t have to come up with or create new works. All you have to do is live dependent on Christ as your Source and He will reveal to you the works designed for you.

Good News! Ministry Is NOT About Your Capability

The primary reason I hear why Christians don't minister to others is, “I am not capable.” If that is where you are, I have some good news for you. You are not capable! Neither am I. The only One who is capable is God. Since God is the Source to accomplish His good works, then He is not depending on your capability to do His work.

In all the years of ministry, God has never once asked me if I am capable to minister. He knows better than that. The only

question He asks me is: “Are you AVAILABLE for me to work through you?” Therefore, as you are available to Him then He will pour His life and power through you to minister to others. Therefore, please remember this key truth:

***Your part in growing out is to be constantly
AVAILABLE for God’s CAPABILITY to work through you.***

Good Works Are SUPERNATURAL

Since God is the Source for the works, all that He accomplishes through us is supernatural. Concerning ministry, a supernatural work is one that only God can accomplish for which there is no man-made explanation for.

We have talked about supernatural in relationship to our personal transformation, but supernatural also refers to the work God does through you. As you depend on Him to do the work through you, His supernatural life and power are flowing through you to transform another person.

Do You Know What God’s Power Through You Can Do?

We have studied the magnitude of God’s power in previous studies. By way of reminder, look at the passage below.

*“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the **same mighty power**²⁰ **that raised Christ from the dead**”*
Ephesians 1:19, 20a

What can this power do? The same thing the Holy Spirit’s power did through Jesus while on earth. Look at what Jesus said in Luke 4:18.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.”

Jesus was speaking about what the Holy Spirit was doing through Him while He lived on the earth. Now that we have Christ living in us, that same power is available to us to do the same things set out in this verse and more.

Think about this. The Holy Spirit through you:

- Can transform someone into Christ-likeness
- Set someone free from a sin stronghold
- Give a person victory over a fleshly behavior
- Heal someone from his/her woundedness
- Encourage, comfort and give hope to another person

How do I know this? Because He has been doing those things through me for over 20 years. Since you have the same power in you, He can and will accomplish those same things and more through you.

CHAPTER THREE

Why Me?

Introduction

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘**Here I am. Send me.**’”*

Isaiah 6:8

God’s desire as you read this verse is that your heart would be the same as Isaiah’s when it comes to your living for others. However, you may struggle with this verse and be asking questions like, “Why me? Why would God use me?” These are valid questions because so many Christians don’t know, don’t see, or don’t believe God could or would use them to transform the lives of other people. Therefore, let’s look at some key truths that will help you understand the answer to this question.

CAPABLE? Or “AVAILABLE?”

The number one reason why so many Christians don’t, or believe they can’t, live for others is because they feel they are not qualified enough, educated enough, or don’t know the Bible well enough to be used by God. They feel inadequate or unworthy. Have you ever asked the question, “How could God possibly use me?” If so, here is a key truth to understand:

God CAN and WILL use you because He is NOT calling those who are CAPABLE to minister to others. Rather, He is calling out those who are AVAILABLE.

To confirm this truth, look at the 12 men that Jesus chose to teach, train, and walk with Him. What you don’t see is 12 seminary-trained theologians or 12 religious leaders of their

day. This was a ragtag group of fishermen, merchants, and one hated tax collector. The truth is that none of them was formally educated. There was nothing extraordinary about them; in fact, they were definitely not qualified, by the world's standards, to even be teachers, preachers, or evangelists.

Couldn't Jesus have picked a more capable group? One of the main reasons Jesus chose these 12 men is to show us that ministry is not about being qualified and capable. Rather, it is about being **willing** and **available**. We see this when Jesus called each of them to be His disciple and He never asked for a ministry resume. Why?

Because there is only ONE Person who is CAPABLE and that is God HIMSELF.

The problem in our Western culture is that we have been "brainwashed" into believing that unless you have been to seminary, Bible school, or received extensive Bible training, you are not qualified to be used of the Lord to spiritually impact others. Furthermore, many Christians use the excuse that ministry to others is the pastor's job, not theirs, because he did go to Bible school or seminary.

The truth is we are not and never will be capable. The good news is that the only One who is capable lives within us and all He is asking is this: "Are you available today for Me to work through you to make a spiritual difference in another person's life?"

Another key reason God wants to work through you is your value to Him.

Your VALUE To God

Have you ever asked God this question: "How valuable am I to You?" If not, what do you imagine His answer would be if you asked? If we don't know how God feels about us, the temptation

is to think we have little or no value to God. If you struggle in this area, remember what He calls you in Ephesians 2:10:

*“For we are His **workmanship (masterpiece)**....”*

You are His workmanship. His masterpiece. How much do you value the greatest earthly treasure you have? Eternally more than that, God treasures and values you. So much so that He would have gone to the cross for you alone if you were the only person on the earth. However, you know it didn't stop there. He put His very life in you (Galatians 2:20) and gave you a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17) in order to live The Life you cannot live and to transform you into Christ-likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18) so that you will live an abundant life (John 10:10) in Him.

Most importantly, in His great love for you, God created you and chose you to be loved by Himself. He uniquely created you for intimacy with Himself. He loves you, cherishes you, desires you, and seeks to be with you moment-by-moment regardless of your sins or your failures. He loves you unconditionally. There is nothing you can do, or not do, to change His deep, intimate love for you (Romans 8:38, 39).

We have a hard time believing these things because of how we see ourselves, especially if it is through a filter of inadequacy, unworthiness, or rejection. If you struggle with self-condemnation because of your sin, fleshly behaviors, or wounded emotions, it is very difficult to see your value to God. However, think about everything He has done in you and for you – all driven by His love for you and the eternal value you are to Him.

Your Value To The “ONE”

There is a man named Mike Wells, who was (he is with the Lord now) the director of Abiding Life Ministries (www.abidinglife.com). He took the Christ-life truths all over the world. He typically went where few people would go and had amazing stories of how the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts

of those he ministered to. However, there is one story that stands out more than all the rest.

When Mike would travel, he would minister in one part of the world for a few months and then he would come home to rest, to write, to counsel, and to prepare for his next trip. He had just gotten back from a trip to India and was exhausted. He was looking forward to some R&R to recharge his batteries. He hadn't been back home in Colorado very long before he got a phone call from a pastor who lived in the area where Mike had just come from and who Mike did not have a chance to visit. The pastor wanted Mike to come back to his church and teach a conference. The pastor promised him it would be a large conference.

Mike told him he was too exhausted to come but that he would pray about it. The Lord told him to go, but Mike was not too happy about going back halfway around the world for one conference. He was exhausted and the airfare was going to cost \$1671 for just this one trip. He was arguing with the Lord about going but the Lord won the argument and Mike went.

He arrived at the conference expecting a large group of people but much to his dismay, only two people showed up. The two people were the pastor and what Mike calls the "one." The "one" was a woman who was born with some physical deformities and as a result she felt very rejected and unloved. Through Mike, God revealed how much He loved and valued this woman and how significant her life was to Him. Further, Mike told her that her life had such significance that the Lord brought him halfway around the world to minister to her. As Mike was sharing the truths of her true identity, the Lord set this lady free. She left rejoicing over her newfound freedom and the realization of how much God loved her. Needless to say, her destiny was changed forever.

When Mike got back on the plane to go home, the Lord spoke to him and said, "This is how much I value 'one' person. I love her enough to take you halfway around the world to minister truth to her. I never want you to forget that any time I choose to

minister through you, you are always going for the ‘one’ whether there is one or one hundred in attendance.”

This radically changed Mike’s attitude towards ministry because from that point on, he was always going for the “one” regardless of how many showed up. What does this mean for you and me? God wants you to see the value of the “one” or “ones” like He does with everyone He brings into your six square feet today. The good news is that you don’t have to go halfway around the world to minister to the “one.” God will bring the “one(s)” into your six square feet today. All you have to do is be available.

Conclusion

Have these key truths helped you answer the question, “Why me?” If so, God will eventually move you from:

***“Why me?” to
“Here I am, send ME.”***

CHAPTER FOUR

Seeing Others Through The Eyes of Christ

Introduction

One of the key ways we live life for others is to see them not with our human eyes but through the eyes of Christ. What does that mean? We will answer that question in this chapter.

How Do We Tend To See People?

When we look at people, we tend to see them in three different ways.

- We look past them as if they weren't even there.
- We look at them but we don't see beyond their exterior.

However, there is a third way that we, as Christians, are able to see others like non-Christians can't.

- We see and experience people through the eyes and heart of Jesus.

What does it mean to see and experience people through Christ? Let's begin our understanding by first looking at some of the biblical words for the word "see."

The Meaning of The Biblical Word "SEE"

*"And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.
Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son;
your sins are forgiven." Matthew 9:2*

Here are some of the various meanings of the word "see" in the Bible when it comes to seeing others:

1. to discover (others)
2. to understand (others)
3. to discern or perceive (others)
4. to focus on. (others)

Even though “seeing” has a human connotation, the kind of “seeing” we are talking about is a supernatural, spiritual seeing.

It Is SUPERNATURAL Sight

As it applies to our study, let’s define supernatural sight this way:

SUPERNATURAL sight is produced by the Holy Spirit in order for you to see past the EXTERNALS of a person and see people through the eyes of Jesus.

By way of application, let’s look at three Bible passages that use some of the above definitions of the word “see.” Let’s begin with Job in Job 42:5:

*“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But **now my eye sees You.**”*

Leading up to this verse, Job has just gone through physical and emotional hell in Chapters 1-37. But I think the worst part of his ordeal was hearing God tell him who He was versus who Job was. It took three chapters (38-41) of God’s talking to Job for him to “see” what the Lord was trying to tell him. In the first part of this verse, “hearing” meant he had an intellectual understanding of what the Lord was saying, but now he had eyes to “see” what the Lord meant.

Applying our definitions of “see” to this verse means Job discovered and understood what the Lord was trying to tell him.

Another one of my favorite passages that describes biblical “seeing” is when Elisha prayed for his servant to have “eyes” to see the chariots of fire on the mountain.

*“Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O LORD, I pray, **open his eyes that he may see.**’ And the **LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw;** and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” 2 Kings 6:17*

When Elisha’s servant’s eyes were opened, then he was able to perceive and discover the chariots of fire ringing the mountain.

We see this in several places in the New Testament as well. Here is an example from Luke when Jesus was talking to the disciples:

*“Turning to the disciples, He said privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes **which see the things you see.** For I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things **which you see,** and did not see them....’” Luke 10:23, 24*

Jesus was telling the disciples that they had spiritual eyes to discern and perceive things that non-Christians did not have.

See Past The Externals and See A Person’s HEAR

Since Christ lives in us, we now have the same “spiritual” eyes to see people as Jesus did. Jesus, while on earth, saw past the externals of people. Here are some examples of those externals:

- Sins
- Failures
- Fleshly behaviors
- Unbelief
- False beliefs

None of those things deterred Him from ministering to anyone who came into His six square feet. Isn’t the same true of what He looks past in you because of His great love for you? Is

He not asking the same of us? Rather than judging or condemning, should we not look past people's sins, failures, etc.? What does God want us to see? He wants us to see the heart. We see this in 1 Samuel 16:7:

*"The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but **the Lord looks at the heart.**"*

Rather than just seeing others externally, we, too, can see people's hearts. Through the eyes of Christ we can see:

- People's needs
- People's woundedness
- People's pain
- People's struggles

Seeing others in this context requires supernatural sight rather than just physical sight. By supernatural, I mean this kind of seeing is Spirit-produced and can only occur as we grow into Christ-likeness. The word "see" in the Bible means to discover, to examine, to understand, and to discern or perceive.

As you grow in Christ, the Spirit will give you eyes to see people's needs, pain, woundedness, etc., with the result that you will find yourself speaking God's truth to them, encouraging them, comforting them, etc. There are two other things you will see as well.

See The VALUE To God of Every Person Who Comes Into Your Six Square Feet

When you are driving down the road and see the homeless person on the side of the road, what are your first thoughts? Do you feel love or compassion? Are you tempted to be condescending, critical, or judgmental because of his/her looks, the way he/she smells, or his/her status as a homeless person? I must admit that if I were to look at this person in the flesh, my thoughts would trend towards being critical and judgmental.

Instead of the homeless person, what if it is the boss, an ex-spouse, your prickly mother-in-law, or the politician you dislike the most – or any other person you deem the most unlikeable person in your life? Isn't it a challenge for you to see and value that person the way God does?

The Lord is persuading me that not only do I have eternal, inestimable, and infinite value to God but so does everyone else who comes into my six square feet. It may be a homeless guy or my server at lunch or even the foreign person who I can't understand over the phone when I have a question about my credit card. Our tendency is to look past people like this and not even ask ourselves the question of how valuable they are to God.

What about the value Jesus places on others? How much did He value the woman caught in adultery or the Samaritan woman He met at the well who had been married five times and was living with a man who was not her husband? Because of their failures and sins, wouldn't it have been easier to avoid, write off, or judge these two? Yet what do we see in the heart of our Lord? We see the eternal value these two women were to Him.

I wonder if there is a direct correlation between how much you believe you are valued by God and how much you value others? In other words, doesn't the extent to which you feel valued by God determine how valuable you perceive others are to God. You might want to give that some thought.

My challenge to you is to focus on everyone who comes into your six square feet every day and ask the question, "How valuable is he or she to God?" As you do, over time you will find yourself more and more looking past people's appearance, personality, sins, and failures and seeing them through the same eyes Jesus sees you.

You Will See The "Spiritual" POTENTIAL In Every Person

What does seeing spiritual potential mean?

***Seeing spiritual potential is believing what
God can accomplish to TRANSFORM a person
REGARDLESS of his/her IQ, status in life,
or the depth of sins or failures.***

It is easy for me to see a person's potential if he/she is seeking and hungry for God's truth. Where I struggle seeing it is with those who are living out of their flesh and resisting God's working in their lives.

Unlike me with my limited vision, God not only sees the here and now but He also sees the spiritual potential in every person regardless of their pursuit of Him or their resistance to Him. God, because of His omniscience, can see where a person's life could be if he/she chose to live from Him as his/her Source. He has provided us with many stories about people in His Word as examples.

We see this in God's interactions with the stuttering Moses who felt totally inadequate to lead His people out of Egypt. God saw Abraham's spiritual potential in the midst of his unbelief when he chose to sleep with Hagar. God even saw it with Gideon in spite of his putting out the fleece and being paralyzed with fear when he faced the Midianites.

When it came to Peter, can you imagine how many times Jesus was shaking His head when Peter would utter the craziest things, or when he was showing off to the other disciples by walking on the water? Even in those moments, Jesus saw the potential in Peter that we can now see realized when we read Peter's letters.

I even look back on my life when I was in total despair and having suicidal thoughts. I saw no hope and no future and yet, what did God see? Potential. He didn't flinch at my doubts because He knew there was coming a time where I would see the death of my self-life and see Him as Life and turn an eternal corner that would change my life forever. Part of my

experiencing my spiritual potential was that God brought believers into my life who saw spiritual potential in me. I am forever grateful for them because I shudder to think where I would be without their willingness to invest in my life.

God wants to use us to be part of other people's experiencing their potential. He wants us to participate with Him in their transformation. But we cannot do that if we are judging them, rejecting them, or not pursuing them.

As the earthly father ran towards the prodigal son, so our heavenly Father runs toward us. He is not deterred by our resistance or our rejection of Him. He keeps coming because He sees the potential in each one of us. Should we not do the same?

The Importance of Seeing People In 3D

Here are some key reasons why knowing people in 3D is so important:

1. We Gain A Better Understanding of The EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE They May Be Carrying

Going back to the six elements that make up seeing people in 3D, we will have eyes to see the baggage people are carrying around in their souls. Here are some examples of emotional baggage:

- a. **Family background:** If a person comes from a wounding background, he/she may have a tendency to wound others.
- b. **Internal struggles:** Internal struggles such as living from fear, insecurity, or inadequacy will create problems in close relationships.
- c. **Relational struggles:** Current or past relational struggles can negatively impact a person's ability to trust or forgive.

- d. **Spiritual struggles**: Fleshly strongholds such as controlling, pornography, or a judgmental attitude will negatively impact how people relate to others.
- e. **Adverse circumstances**: Adverse circumstances such as divorce, past abandonment, health, or financial struggles, etc., can create a sense of abandonment, fear, or anxiety.
- f. **Church affiliation or biblical background**: This is crucial in understanding why people believe what they believe about God, others, and living the Christian life. This is especially true if they are living with false beliefs which are undermining their Christian walk.

Since we all live in a fallen world surrounded by fallen people, we are all carrying around emotional baggage of one kind or another. This baggage unfortunately negatively impacts our hearts personally and our relationships with others. Therefore, knowing and understanding someone else's baggage will help you for the following reasons.

2. It Helps You SPIRITUALLY NAVIGATE A Relationship

Without seeing people in 3D, it will be very difficult to navigate relationships. The definition of "navigate" means to very carefully travel over water or terrain in order to avoid running into obstacles. In the same way, spiritual navigation allows us to discern from the Holy Spirit how to walk with another person if we know his/her heart. Spiritual navigation also helps us avoid stepping on people's toes.

3. It Helps You SPIRITUALLY Help Another Person

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind." Luke 4:18

This is Jesus proclaiming what He was called to do while on the earth. Is it possible that you have the same calling? Since Christ now lives in you, is it possible He can and will do these same things through you? The answer is, “Yes!”

Let’s look at a few practical examples of how seeing people in 3D will allow you to spiritually help another person:

- It gives you a deeper awareness of how you can encourage others, pray for them, or walk beside them.
- It gives you insight as to how and when to be sensitive and compassionate in areas where they struggle.
- When prompted by the Spirit, you can share biblical truth related to specific issues in their lives.
- Instead of judging, comparing, or setting expectations, you will give grace by seeking to spiritually build them up and by being set free of your unrealistic expectations.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ultimate Objective of Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Christ

It Is Summed Up in the Second Greatest Commandment

I believe the ultimate objective of seeing others through the eyes of Christ is summed up in the second of the two greatest commandments:

*“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’” Matthew 22:37-40*

***Ultimately, seeing others through the eyes of Christ
means LOVING them with the love of Christ.***

What does “to love others with the love of Jesus” really mean? Love comes in many forms but the love of Christ only comes in one. It is called “*agape*” love. Let me define “*agape*” love.

***Agape love is the DIVINE love that
ONLY comes from God.***

***Agape love is PERFECT, UNCONDITIONAL,
SACRIFICIAL and SELFLESS.***

Whenever I go to speak, my wife always says these words: “When love is felt, the message is heard.” It is a great reminder because the filter for all the Lord wants to do through us is His unconditional love. If it is not, Paul says we are just a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

*“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but **do not have love**, I have become a **noisy gong** or a **clanging cymbal**.”*

1 Corinthians 13:1.

As Christians, we are called to be messengers of truth, ministers, encouragers, teachers, evangelists, etc., but the key to living life for others is found in these two verses.

*“...**speak the truth in love**....” Ephesians 4:15*

*“Let **all that you do** be done in **love**.” 1 Corinthians 16:14*

Just as important as the truth you are sharing, is the attitude with which you share it. Truth spoken through Christ’s unconditional love is the key for the message to be heard.

Loving Others With Agape Love

Loving others with *agape* love means that you love everyone equally regardless because *agape* love has:

- No conditions
- No expectations
- No fleshly rights
- No limitations
- No selfish motives

In addition, *agape* love doesn’t judge, criticize, compare, take offense, or hold grudges. *Agape* love is unconditional which removes all excuses for not loving others.

What Do We Need To Know About Agape Love?

Agape Love = POWER

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of **power and love...**”
1 Timothy 1:7*

I compare this truth to an iron fist in a velvet glove. The iron fist is God’s power and the velvet glove is His love. What can His power in love accomplish?

- It can disarm others and make them open and transparent.
- It can bring a person to brokenness.
- It can draw an unbeliever to salvation.
- It can move people to love you.

In addition, God’s love through you can:

- **PENETRATE** someone’s heart so that person will hear God’s truth
- **SOFTEN** someone’s heart so that person will be responsive to the truth
- **FREE** someone’s heart from the bondage of his or her flesh and fleshly behaviors
- **UNLOCK** a person’s heart so that person will share the deep things of his or her heart
- **HEAL** someone’s heart from past or present woundedness
- **TRANSFORM** someone’s heart into Christ-likeness

Agape Love Is An UNSTOPPABLE Force

*“For **I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Romans 8:38, 39*

Romans 8:38, 39 promises that nothing will separate us from God's love. In addition, Paul tells us that nothing and no one is going to stop God from loving you. Likewise, no one can stop you from loving other people. The person you are loving may say, "No" to your overtures of love, but that will not stop Christ's love from pouring through you into that person, because His love is truly an unstoppable force.

When I think of this truth, it reminds me of one of my board members who calls me periodically and says, "I love you, Bill and there is nothing you can do about it." Isn't this a great example of the unstoppable love of God?

Agape Love Makes You "SAFE"

First, let me tell you what I mean by "safe."

By safe, I mean that others will TRUST you enough to share their struggles and know you will LOVE them rather than condemning or judging them.

Becoming a safe person is a process, for the most part, but by your increasingly loving others with Christ's love, you will eventually create an atmosphere of safety that allows others to trust you.

I, like you, have some deeply personal issues that I would like to share with others. I think we all are looking for safe people because God designed us for deep relationships. We know that God is to be our ultimate "go to" safe person. No one is safer than God. But as human beings we need Christ-like believers with human skin with whom we can relate to.

Here are some characteristics of a "safe" person:

- Being trustworthy is the most important characteristic because trust equals vulnerability.
- You listen attentively and are focused on them.

- You are compassionate and empathetic.
- You are not trying to “fix” someone or necessarily solve whatever it is they are struggling with.
- You aren’t critical, judgmental or condescending.
- Others feel secure with you.
- Others are experiencing Christ’s love flowing through you.

I believe safe people are what an unbelieving and struggling world is looking for. If that is true, shouldn’t Christians be the safest people on earth? People like you who can be trusted to handle, with the utmost care and love, others’ struggles, heartaches, and any other issue they are facing.

Agape Love Is The KEY To Unlocking A Person’s Heart

*“...and hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts** through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:5*

I have seen God’s love unlock many people’s hearts, including mine. I had a padlock on the door of a heart filled with anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, and woundedness. This went on for many years until God brought a man into my life in 1996 named David Love. (God’s sense of humor to bring a Love to a Loveless.)

This was the darkest time in my life. The wheels were falling off and I was spiraling down into depression and despair. David and his wife Denise were missionaries to Colombia at the time. We met because as head of the mission’s committee of my church, I was interviewing David to see if our church would support them financially. I went to pick him up for lunch at a restaurant and on the way there he said very few words. Little did I know what was about to happen.

I started the interview with a question but he didn’t give me a response. I thought that was strange but I was soon to realize we weren’t there for me to interview him. Rather, we were there for me to experience the love and power of Jesus through him.

When David finally opened his mouth, he didn't answer my questions. Rather, he started probing me about my life. Before I knew it, I had spent the next 3 hours pouring out 46 years of pent-up pain and heartache. Christ's love through him was so powerful I couldn't stop weeping in the middle of the restaurant.

I didn't realize at the time that it was not only the love of Christ that was being poured out through him, but also the power that love had to be able to pierce the thick walls of self-protection surrounding my heart. Looking back, I recognize it was God's power flowing through His love that was beginning to set me free.

All I knew at the time was I was being loved by Jesus through David. His love was unconditional and irresistible. (Since then, David and I have become very close friends.) When I look back on that event, I recognize that what I saw and experienced was the irresistibility of *agape* love that unlocked my heart.

Agape Love Is The NO Excuse Form of Love

Similar to loving others with no conditions, expectations, etc., *agape* love prevents us from using fleshly excuses not to love others. Here is a story to bear this out. Some time ago, there was a man talking about his relationship with his siblings. He kept repeating that he couldn't truly love them or reconcile with them until they repented of all their wrongdoings towards him.

This was the beginning of a number of excuses he was making to justify not loving them. Just like this man's flesh, our flesh can come up with many excuses not to love. Here are a few examples of some of those fleshly excuses:

- **Unforgiveness:** *"I can't love them until they fully repent and ask for forgiveness."*
- **Unmet expectations:** *"Since they are not meeting my expectations concerning how they should love me, I don't have to love them in return."*

- **Rejection:** *"I can't love them because of the many ways they have rejected me."*
- **Woundedness:** *"I can't and won't love them because of how badly they have wounded me."*

Are you using any of these excuses to not love others? This is why *agape* love is called the "no excuse" love.

NO MATTER the FLESHLY excuses we come up with to NOT love others, NONE of them will hold up because AGAPE love has NO excuses.

Aren't you glad God loves you with the "no excuse" *agape* love? Should that not be our heart with which to love others?

Agape Love Frees You FROM...

*"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only **do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**" Galatians 5:13*

Here is a key truth when it comes to loving others:

You have to be free FROM something before you can be free TO love someone.

Think about this for minute. Can you do these things listed below and still love others at the same time?

- Judge
- Criticize
- Compare
- Take offense
- Hold onto the right not to forgive

The answer is obviously “no.” You can’t do any of these things and still love others. This is why it is so crucial to seek God to set you free from them.

Agape Love Makes You UNREJECTABLE, UNOFFENDABLE, and IMPENETRABLE

If you remember from Books One and Two, we talked about your spiritual armor thickening as you grow in Christ. The “divine” thickening occurs as you increasingly believe and walk in the truth of who Christ is in you (Christ-likeness) and who you are in Christ (your true identity). Divine thickening also results from the love of Christ growing in you.

Every step of faith increases the love of Christ in you which will protect you from those who want to reject and offend you. Your love will grow to a point where when someone is rejecting or offending you, you will not only not be taking ownership of their rejection and offense but in that moment, you will be loving them with the love of Christ.

Agape Love DRAWS People To Christ In You

Why were people drawn to Jesus? Was it His looks, His personality, or was it the Father’s love through Him that drew people to Him? As Christ lived in dependence on the Father and the Holy Spirit, people were drawn to their love in and through Him. As we grow spiritually, the fruit of Christ’s love will ripen and become more attractive to others. Remember this key truth:

ALL we have to offer others is CHRIST’S LOVE in us.

Nothing in and of ourselves will draw others to Christ in us other than Christ’s love being expressed through us.

CHAPTER SIX

Final Key Truths In Living For Others In Your Six Square Feet

Introduction

We touched on this topic of being a safe person earlier when we were looking at the characteristics of *agape* love. However, let's take a deeper dive into what it means to be a "safe" person to people whom the Lord brings into your six square feet. Think about it for a moment. Why would someone come to you in the first place if he or she didn't think you were safe? The key to being "safe" as we discussed earlier is being trustworthy. Based on this, let's define a "safe" person.

A SAFE person is one you are able to TRUST on some level with your MOST personal thoughts, beliefs, and struggles.

Someone said, "We all need to be able to talk to someone who is like Jesus with skin on." Since Christ is in you, you may be the one with "skin on" that God brings someone to. We know that God is our ultimate "go to" safe person. Because there is no one safer than God, He should be the one we turn to first. But as human beings, we sometimes need Christ-like believers with whom we can relate to as well. Therefore, let's look at some characteristics of a safe person.

Someone Who Is LOVING - Not Judging, Guiltin, or Shaming

*"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only **do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**" Galatians 5:13*

The number one characteristic people want to experience is someone who is loving and will not guilt, shame, or condemn them regardless of what they share. This can be a test especially with some struggle a person may be having that you don't struggle with, or you think a Christian shouldn't struggle with. These two things might tempt you to guilt, shame, or condemn that person.

For example, let's assume someone is sharing his or her struggle with an addiction to pornography with you. Let's also assume you have never struggled with pornography and you think a Christian should be strong enough to always overcome the temptation. When you hear this person sharing, you might be tempted to think fleshly thoughts of guilt, shame, or condemnation. Even though you might not verbalize those thoughts, they will distract you from loving that person.

Someone Who Expresses Christ's Compassion and Empathy

Whether you are naturally compassionate or not, what hurting people want to experience is Christ's compassion and empathy through you. Therefore, when you are meeting with someone who is struggling, you might consider praying this simple prayer, "Lord, flow Your compassion and empathy through me to them." Whether or not you are feeling compassion flowing through you, doesn't change the truth that this is what is happening.

Here is a personal story to explain. I had no human compassion because of my past abuse. One of the reasons God brought me into ministry was to transform me to becoming a compassionate person. To accomplish this, God would bring me hurting people and my ongoing prayer was for the Lord to flow His compassion through me. Even though I was not feeling the Lord's compassion, after praying that prayer for six months something happened. In one session with a couple I had been meeting with for awhile, the wife said these words at the end of

the session: “Thank you so much for being so compassionate with us.” Even though I was not experiencing the Lord’s compassion at that moment, they were experiencing it through me. Through this process God transformed me to experience great compassion for hurting people.

Not Trying To FIX Someone

When people come to us, out of concern and compassion we may feel a need to fix their problem or fix them. However, as you well know, the only One who can truly fix (transform) someone else is God. It is not your responsibility. All you can do is share truth and seek the Holy Spirit to transform that person.

Being A Good LISTENER

Some people are natural born listeners, and some are born talkers. When someone is coming to you and is struggling and needs help, encouragement, comfort, etc., it is crucial to totally focus on listening to him or her because sometimes that is all that is needed. Here is a true story to illustrate.

A pastor of a local church called me one afternoon and asked me to come to his office because he had a personal struggle he wanted to share. When I got there, the pastor told me that he only had about forty minutes to meet. The pastor started in and it wasn’t until three hours later that he finished talking about his struggle. He thanked me for coming and for being such a great encouragement to him. However, all I did during that whole three hours was listen. What I realized was that all the pastor needed was a human being he could verbalize his struggle to because the real conversation was between the pastor and the Holy Spirit.

In addition to just listening, as we discussed earlier, there is “spiritual listening” as well. By way of reminder:

SPIRITUAL listening is when you are NOT ONLY listening to what the PERSON is saying, you are also listening to the HOLY SPIRIT.

As you are listening to the person and the Holy Spirit, He will give you insight into what is behind what a person is saying. He will give you the right words to say and the right time to say them.

Being “All There”

Jim Elliot, a missionary who was martyred in Ecuador, famously said, *“Wherever you are, be all there.”* What words come to mind when you think about that phrase? Maybe words like “focused,” “engaged,” and “attentive.” How could this phrase apply to helping a hurting person? Have you ever been in a serious conversation with someone who was constantly checking the phone or was distracted by something else? Didn’t it make you feel less important or undervalued?

What better example is there of being “all there” than Jesus. Can you imagine what it would be like to be in the presence of Jesus when He walked on the earth? Imagine Him calling you out of the crowd and you are standing in front of Him. Even though He is surrounded by several people, He does not look to the left or right. He is not distracted by the noise of the crowd. His attention is totally fixed on you. He is totally engaged, focused, and attentive. How would that make you feel? Loved, accepted, and important? Here is a story to illustrate being “all there.”

You may have heard about Max Lucado, the pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio who is also a well-known author. My wife and I were visiting Oak Hills Church one Sunday with some friends who are members there. When the service was over, we followed our friends out of the worship center into a huge hallway. The hallway was packed with hundreds of people. We

were walking behind our friends down this very crowded hallway when suddenly, our friends took a hard right turn and began walking toward Max Lucado who was standing against the wall by himself.

Our friend introduced us to Max, and we spent the next three minutes talking with him. He asked about our personal lives and about the ministry we were involved in. During our time together, Max was totally focused on us. He was not looking past us to greet others. Nor was he distracted by all the crowd noise. He was talking to us as if there was no one else in the hallway and he had all the time in the world. In other words, he was “all there.”

Key Points In Living Life For Others

Before we end this study, let's look at some final key points in living life for others.

POUR OUT What You Have

At some point in this study, you may have concluded that you don't know enough scripture or need more training to live for others. If that is where you are in your thinking, think about this. If God brings someone to you to speak truth, encourage, etc., and you only have a teaspoon of truth, that teaspoon is all that person needs. All God is asking you to do is to pour it out. Look at what Mary did with what she had.

*“While He (Jesus) was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman (Mary, Martha's sister) with **an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard**; and she broke the vial and **poured it over His head.**”*

Mark 14:3

This is a powerful story because Mary brought an alabaster jar full of expensive perfume (estimated value at around \$10,000 today) and poured it all out on Jesus' head. She didn't keep any back for herself. The same is true for you. God doesn't

want you to hold anything back because He is not waiting until you have all the answers or know all the scriptures. (Which, by the way, doesn't happen this side of heaven.)

He is bringing someone to you today to speak the truth that you know or are experiencing. Remember that as you seek the Holy Spirit, He will bring thoughts, verses, and words to mind. Just like Mary, pour out all you have.

Being Used of God Is A PRIVILEGE

“But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.”

2 Peter 2:16

God doesn't need us because He spoke just fine through a burning bush, a rock, and a donkey. However, God so loves you that He is calling you to join Him in building His church. Remember, He will bring someone to you that He would bring to no one else. He is giving you the amazing privilege of working with Him so that you can witness the supernatural power of His hand.

This is how much He loves you. If you could grasp how significant it is that God is giving you this amazing privilege, wouldn't that be worth getting out of bed every day and making yourself available to Him?

Remember Your TESTIMONY Is A Powerful Weapon

It has been said that “One word of testimony is worth a 1000 words of teaching.” The most powerful weapon you are ministering in your six square feet is your testimony. If you have walked long enough in your spiritual journey to experience some degree of victory, freedom, or transformation, there is nothing more powerful than you bearing witness to what the Holy Spirit has accomplished in your life.

When you do, God's truth is more than words on a page; it is living and breathing through you as you share with others what God has supernaturally accomplished in your life. People may not agree with what you are sharing with them concerning God's truth, but here is a key truth when it comes to your testimony:

People may contradict your THEOLOGY, but they cannot contradict your TESTIMONY.

CONCLUSION

Look at what Jesus says in Matthew 16:18:

"...I (Jesus) will build my church...."

What does it mean for Christ to build His church?

Christ wants to GROW us up spiritually, TRANSFORM our lives into His likeness, to EXPERIENCE our true identity, and experience a DEEP, PERSONAL LOVE relationship with Him.

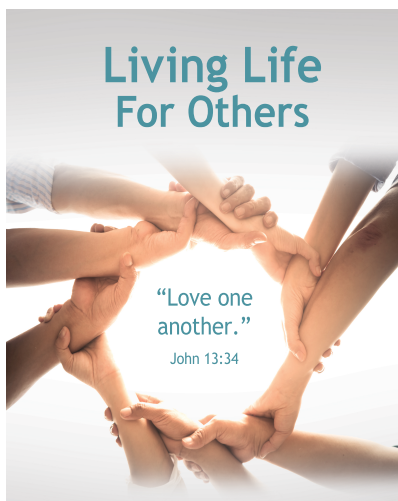
We know the Lord can build His church without us, but He is giving you and me the amazing privilege of participating with Him to build His church through us. What will Christ's church look like as He builds it through you? We see the answer in Ephesians 4:15, 16:

"...we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

Think about it. Through you, God can change destinies, grow others up spiritually and be a vital part of making the body of Christ spiritually healthy and full of love. What a wonderful privilege that is which brings me to my final question:

Are you available?

Where Do I Go From Here?



The curriculum *Living Life For Others* is an in-depth curriculum that will give you a deeper understanding of the truths in this booklet. It is designed for personal use, one-on-one, small groups and Sunday morning classes.

You can download and reproduce it for free from our website listed on the following page.

I hope you will take advantage of this study and seek the Lord for a deeper understanding of what it means to grow out.

Blessings in Christ,

Bill Loveless

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(5-1-23)

OTHERS

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

Ephesians 4:16

As we grow up spiritually, and are transformed to live from Christ-likeness and our true identity, we become more selfless and other's focused. As we begin see others with the eyes of Christ, we will find ourselves wanting to speak truth, encourage and give hope to others. This booklet will help you understand the meaning of Paul's words in Ephesians 4:16.

This booklet is designed to answer the following questions:

- What does it mean to minister to people in your six square feet?
- What does it mean to see others with the eyes of Christ?
- Why is it so important to look past the externals of another person and see their heart?
- What is the ultimate objective of living life for others?
- How do we love others with agape love?



Bill Loveless is the director of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM). CILM is a non-profit, non-denominational ministry that focuses on discipleship. We teach Christians that Christ is our only Source for living the Christian life and what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness and be drawn into a deeper intimacy with Him.

For further information and to see the other materials being offered, please go to our website:
www.christislifeministries.com

