



THE ROAD TO LOVE...

■ A STUDY OF JOHN 15:4-13 by Dr. John D. DeBrine ■

For want of a nail - the shoe was lost
For want of a shoe the horse was lost
For want of a horse the rider was lost
For want of a rider the battle was lost
For want of a battle the country was lost....

AND ALL FOR THE LOSS OF A TWO-PENNY NAIL!

(George Hebert wrote this back in 1590 - quoted from Benjamin Franklin)

Here's the idea: a little thing may cause you to lose a much greater thing. Keep this chain in mind- in which not even one link can be broken, and you'll see the impact of each link in John 15:4-13

I. THE FIRST GOAL IS LOVE

"This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

Greater love has no man than this, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

I wonder if someone reading this needs a commercial (a radio term) in order to aim for this kind of love. Love cannot co-exist with selfishness. In fact, to the degree that love prevails, selfishness is destroyed. Dr. John Brown once said, *"Love does - love must do - all practical good. If evil is done - if good is not done - it is just because love is not there in sufficient force."* Perhaps the strongest motivation for discovering the love of John 15:12-13 is seen in I Corinthians 13.

I used the following about a year ago in Bermuda when some ten couples wanted to renew their wedding vows

during the Songtime USA tour of Bermuda:

CHECKLIST ON LOVE

GOD IS LOVE.. May you have His kind of love for each other.

LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND... May you be able to lovingly overlook each others faults & weaknesses.

LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR BOASTFUL... May you seek praise for each other and not for yourselves.

LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT OR RUDE... May you give of yourselves for each others needs and treat one another with utmost respect.

LOVE DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY... May you genuinely listen to each other with a willingness to be wrong yourselves.

LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE OR RESENTFUL... May you be

tolerant of each others moods, always ready to forgive, never holding a grudge.

LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONG BUT REJOICES IN RIGHT... May you experience happiness because of

each others triumphs and successes.

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS... May you seek to understand each others differences knowing that you will stick together through it all.

LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS... May you always expect the

best in each situation regardless of temporary setbacks.

LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS... May you never give up your commitment to work on improving your relationship.

LOVE NEVER ENDS... May you spend the rest of your lives together enjoying His love. GOD IS LOVE!

We Love Bermuda!

We had a wonderful time in Bermuda this past October and look forward to returning this year on September 17-25. Dr. DeBrine brought the messages each morning. Highlights of the week included a moonlight sail through Hamilton Harbor, "Beatin' the Retreat" - a ceremony where we were privileged to have front row seats reserved for honored guests, swimming, playing games, singing & Talent Night. If you've never been to Bermuda, why not plan to join us. Call or write for a brochure and registration form.

II. THE STEPS TO JOHN 15:12-13 LOVE

Let me say immediately this has nothing to do with lust or some form of legalism. You can hang signs all over the house saying, "love me", but that not only immediately reveals a total mis-understanding of John 15:12-13 love but it will soon be evident such commands don't work! Keep that "chain" in mind. You have something very similar here and let me prove that by noting the steps to the love of John

Continued on Next Page

15:12-13:

1. Abide in Christ- verse 4
this results in -
2. Bearing fruit- verse 5
this results in -
3. Glorifying God- verse 8
this results in -
4. Inner mental attitude joy- verse 11
this results in -
5. Love- verse 12b

As I read John 15:13 the Holy Spirit brought Ephesians 5:25 to mind.

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise.”

Since, according to I Corinthians 11:7b-8, women are responders - husbands, attention! You are going to have a beautiful wife when you treat her the way Christ treated the church! Don Lonie, a retired High School assembly speaker once said, “Love your enemies...you made them.” In a similar way we can say to husbands, “*Don’t knock your wife because you’re telling on yourself.*” A total understanding of Ephesians 5:25 and I Corinthians 13 prevents divorce. Often divorce simply leads to another divorce and then another and another. If you need proof, look at what Hollywood produces! Lust- but not love.

Application: Go back to the chain where we started at the beginning of our article. You have to do that here in John 15. All of the links of the John 15 chain (bearing fruit, glorifying God, Joy and love) depend on abiding in Christ as noted in verse 4.

The issue then becomes this: How do we abide in Christ? The Greek word is *mevw* (meno) and the use of the present tense reminds us it is a daily concern so — how do we do it? Again the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. I John 1:9 is a text which we utilize daily and the procedure is as follows:

1. Confess your sin.
(Be specific - name it)
2. Ask God to deal with you on the basis of His character because He is faithful and just.
3. Thank God for answering because when God says it - that settles it and we must believe it since no authority supersedes the Word of God.

Incidentally, the present tense concept of this word “abide” is illustrated in Ephesians 4:26-27 which says:

“never go to bed without settling ac-

counts”. Failure to ignore this present tense concept gives place to the devil or literally, creates an atmosphere where it is very easy for Satan to gain a foothold. Now I think we all understand John 15:4-13 but have we applied it? The application, according to Genesis 22:5-12, is **genuine worship**. If you want to personally test yourself to see if you have made application, turn to Ephesians 4:32. By way of quick summary, Ephesians 4:32 states that if we cannot forgive, there is every reason to wonder if we have been forgiven!

May the Holy Spirit make each link in the chain of John 15 real as you discover the love that comes from the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

“And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” - Ephesians 4:32

DR. JOHN'S SCHEDULE

March 13-15

Russian Ukranian Evangelical Baptist Union - Ashford, CT.

March 27-29

Callaway Gardens
Pine Mountain, GA
with Steve Brown

April 5

Cornerstone Christian Church
14 Brandy Brow Road
Haverhill, MA

April 19

First Baptist Church
2 Tremont St. Duxbury, MA
10 AM & 6 PM services

A SONGTIME “HYMNSTORY”

■ Bill Dagle ■

More than likely you have heard or read the story behind the writing of “It Is Well With My Soul”. You have heard how Horatio Spafford, a successful Chicago lawyer wrote the words after receiving the tragic news of the death of his four daughters on that fateful night of November 22, 1873 when the Ville deHavre, a passenger ship, was sunk in a mid-ocean collision. Of the few survivors, only his wife was saved - alone. But most people don’t know the rest of the story - a story that would take me all the way to Jerusalem.

It was a year ago this month that my wife Linda and I boarded a plane in New York city for the Holy Land. During our 10-day stay, I was able to visit the American Colony Hotel and the Children’s Hospital - both establishments founded by our renowned author, Horatio Spafford. To add more intrigue to the story, I met the last living member of the Spafford family. It was there in the lobby of the American Colony Hotel that I found the chilling details of that horrible voyage that inspired this great hymn to be written.

Back in 1873, Horatio had decided to take his family to France and then on to Switzerland, which is why passage was booked on the French liner, SS Ville du Havre. Because of last minute business, Horatio would stay behind a few weeks, catching up with his family later. After boarding the ship in New York with them, an uneasy feeling caused Horatio to have his family change their cabin to one in the bow of the ship. It would be just a few days later, at two in the morning, that the ship would be sliced in half at the very cabin where the Spaffords were originally placed. Even in their cabin in the bow, it took less than twelve minutes for the children to succumb to the rushing water, but Anna survived. If they hadn’t changed cabins, she would surely have died as well.

Had Anna died, history would have taken a very different course, for it was when Horatio Spafford was in route to re-unite with his wife that he penned the words to the song. When finally back in Chicago, they would eventually have three more children - Horatio Jr., who died of scarlet fever at the age of 4, and two girls, Bertha and Grace. Both of the girls would eventually travel to Jerusalem with their parents to start the legacy of the American Colony Hotel and the beginning of the hospital. The ownership of the Hotel has been in the Spafford family ever since.

The shipwreck of the Ville du Havre would remain one of the unexplained tragedies of the sea and its greatest disaster up until the sinking of the Titanic. Many people's existence here on earth is much the same when troubles come their way. If only we too could say, “*When sorrows like sea billows roll, it is well - it is well with my soul.*” I believe that through Christ Jesus, we can — Horatio Spafford did!

WHERE DO PEOPLE GO AFTER THEY DIE?

■ Steven W. Butts ■

Is there life after death? Although this question has puzzled people for centuries, most are inclined to feel that physical death does not end their existence. Along with this, many people expect that they will have to give an account for their earthly lives. In his recent book *The Evangelical Mind and Heart*, Millard Erickson suggests a six point answer to the question of where people go after death. Erickson's points, based on the clear teaching of scripture, deserve careful reflection.

1. All humans are sinners, by nature and by choice; they are therefore guilty and under divine condemnation.

2. Salvation is only through Christ and His atoning work.

3. In order to obtain the salvation achieved by Christ, one must believe in Him; therefore Christians and the church have a responsibility to tell unbelievers the good news about Him.

4. The adherents of other faiths, no matter how sincere their belief or how intense their religious activity, are spiritually lost apart from Christ.

5. Physical death brings to an end the opportunity to exercise saving faith and accept Jesus Christ. The decisions made in this life are irrevocably fixed at death.

6. At the great final judgment all humans will be separated on the basis of their relationship to Christ during this life. Those who have believed in Him will spend eternity in heaven, where they will experience everlasting joy and reward in God's presence. Those who have not accepted Christ will experience hell, a place of unending suffering and separation from God.

Some will resent these points, declaring them to be too exclusive. Yet it must be understood that God's offer of salvation extends to *everyone*. The most well known verse of scripture, John 3:16, reminds us that, "God so loved the world that he gave . . ."

Others will accept some of Erickson's points but find his belief in eternal hell

objectionable. It has become increasingly popular, even among Christians, to deny or tone down biblical statements on eternal punishment.

Despite the fact that orthodox Christian teaching has consistently presented hell as a place of eternal conscious punishment, a variety of other theories are being offered as legitimate Christian alternatives.

Among these alternatives, the theory of universalism (the idea that all people will ultimately be saved), though completely contrary to scripture, has actually been considered. However, the ultimate annihilation of the wicked has received a stronger welcome within evangelical circles. Of course all such theories fail miserably when they are compared with the teaching of Jesus. He referred to hell as a place people are sent to in judgment. He described it as "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:41,46). Jesus also said it was a place of darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, torment, and a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. While it is true that Jesus used some metaphors to describe hell, D.A. Carson points out that, ". . . even if we assume that the language is metaphorical, it is metaphorical language that has a referent; and if the metaphors are doing their job, they are evoking images of a horrible existence." Jesus warned his followers, ". . . do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Admittedly, the thought of "unending suffering and separation from God" is emotionally difficult (if not impossible) to understand. However, we cannot ignore the facts because we find them emotionally disturbing. Nor are we at liberty (if we want to be called Christians) to pick and choose only those biblical teachings we find acceptable. Furthermore, the scripture reminds us

that God does not desire that any perish but that all come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). Yet, as Carson has written, "We must always remember that the Bible does not present us with a God who chances upon neutral men and women and arbitrarily consigns some to heaven and some to hell. He takes guilty men and women, all of whom deserve his wrath, and in his great mercy and love he saves vast numbers of them. Had he saved only one, it would have been an act of grace; that he saves a vast host affirms still more unmistakably the uncharted reaches of that grace. From a biblical perspective, hell stands as a horrible witness to human defiance in the face of great grace."

C. S. Lewis offered the following consideration to those who find the teaching about hell objectionable, "In the long run, the answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell is itself a question: What are you asking God to do? To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But he has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? But THEY will not BE forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid that's what he does."

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■ *Dr. Bob Burrelli Answers* ■ *Songtime Listener Questions*

Q: Is it wrong for Christians to be afraid?

A: It is not wrong for Christians to be afraid, so long as their fear is legitimate. Let me explain:

It is important that we understand that fear is a God-given emotion. Some Christians would like to believe that a display of emotion shows lack of control or weakness. This is simply not true. Our Lord Himself wept, grew tired, showed compassion, and got angry. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . with many tears" (2 Cor 2:4). These people were human. God has given human beings emotion and expects them to properly express emotion *to His glory* and for the benefit of others as well as ourselves.

Having said this, we must also understand that emotions are only right and healthy to express when they are not abused. To abuse our emotions would be sinful. For example: Paul commands us to be angry and sin not (Eph. 4:26). We gather from this context that there is a situation in which Christians may and, in fact, should get angry - but only in a proper way. There are improper ways to be angry, and Paul gives one of them: "Don't let the sun go down on your anger." In other words, holding anger in is sinful, for it causes us to become embittered and hold grudges toward our neigh-

bor. Another way of abusing anger is to explode. (Prov. 14:17, 29; 15:1, 18)

Let's talk about fear, since that was the specific emotion in question. Fear, as a God-given emotion, is very helpful and praiseworthy. God has actually built into you an emotional mechanism, called fear, which will help you to protect yourself. It is your body's warning system when something is not right. Let's say you visit a missionary in Mozambique. While there, he cautions you not to go out for a stroll in the fields at dusk, because the lions roam around looking for food. In a postcard to the church, you recount the wonderful blessing God has showered upon your visit and that you don't dare go out walking in the beautiful fields at dusk, for fear of man-eating lions. That is a healthy fear. You do not want to overcome such a fear, because it keeps you alive.

Your fear of speaking in public, on the other hand, is something you must overcome, because it is preventing you from standing up in the assembly and giving public praise to God. God commands us to praise Him corporately, as it glorifies him and edifies those who listen, and nothing must hinder us from doing so. If fear prevents us from doing that, or any other biblical command or principle, it is illegitimate, sinful, and must be overcome - for God's glory and the benefit of others as well as yourself.

IN THE SONGTIME BOOKSTORE

☐ **The Things That Matter Most** - by Cal Thomas. The culture has refused to impose a set of standards rooted in immutable values on young people. Criminals aren't born, they're *made*; and America is manufacturing them in record numbers. Cal Thomas challenges readers to honestly assess their surroundings.

(HARDCOVER BOOK) \$22.00

☐ **At Home in Mitford** - by Jan Karon. A book for readers who yearn for a cozy read. This is the first of four books by Karon in her Mitford Years. Marge says: "*It's the best fiction book I've ever read!*" A great series of books to read on a snowy afternoon.

(PAPERBACK BOOK) \$15.00

Tour Lancaster! April 30-May 3

A full day in Gettysburg is planned as we have our guided bus tour through the Nation's greatest battlefield. We'll visit many historic sites, go to the Eisenhower home-
stead and in the evening, we'll attend the "live" one-man Lincoln program. Mr. Lincoln will trace the chronology of his life, the Civil War and his coming to Gettysburg. One evening we'll also attend the American Music Theatre. For a registration form, please call Marge. Cost per person is \$530/single, \$400/double, \$360/triple or \$340/quad. \$100 deposit is needed immediately to assure your seat on the bus. Cost includes bus, 3 nights at Willow Valley, breakfasts, one other meal each day and tour costs.

Each month around 40 folks gather at our Songtime office to help mail almost 20,000 newsletters to you, our Songtime listeners. In December we held a "thank you" luncheon for them at the Songtime headquarters in Hyannis. The monthly mailings take 4-5 days each month as these dedicated volunteer workers label envelopes, stuff newsletters, ready the receipts and then band and box them for shipment via Ryder Truck to the US Post Office.

We Love our Volunteers!