



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Romans 12:9-21
- Mark 12:28-34

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

- The Greatest Commandment
- User Guide to Christianity

SEED:

“Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, **“Which is the first commandment of all?”** Jesus answered him, **“The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”** So the scribe said to Him, **“Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”**

Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, **“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”** But after that no one dared question Him.” Mark 12:28-34 NKJV

FRUIT:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another; as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”” John 13:34-35 NKJV

“Let **love** be without **hypocrisy**. **Abhor** what is **evil**. **Cling** to what is **good**.” Romans 12:9 NKJV

NARRATIVE FOR TODAY’S SCRIPTURES: ROMANS

Imagine a world in which people lived in such a way and considered others as described in these attending verses. It might seem cliché, but love is the answer. God is love and if you truly love God the way He loves you, you will love others as God does, as this is precisely what identifies His followers. Love is what encapsulates the sum of every commandment in the Bible, in fact if asked to recite all of God’s law standing on one foot and doing so in one breath, you’d say, “Love God and love your neighbor.”

Brewing deep within your neural network, that seemingly infinite number of neurons wired and rewired in your brain, is the

ever-increasing and complex web of nerves that each stretch to make intimate connections with more and more of its cousins, until your entire brain is rewired to think like God. This metamorphosis of your brain, this radical transformation of how you think must be relentless. Anything short of a tenacious pursuit of such will yield only hypocritical results—the say one thing, do another sort. We can't have that!

In fact representing that you represent God and acting otherwise might be the most malignant type of evil. No, abhor evil, hate it with a passion; and cling to what is good, and pure, and righteous and holy. Bind yourself to what is virtuous to such a degree that it is literally impossible to be separated from it. Like two of the most delicate pieces of tissue paper glued together with an epoxy, so strong that they can withstand a thousand times a thousand pounds of pulling. And even if they could be pulled apart, these two feathery parchments could never be distinguished one from another. That is the level of commitment to love that God expects. In practice, this is what that would look like:

Let kindness and affection, caring and compassion, a desire to serve and meekness, rule over your relationships in such a way that it is obvious you care more about others than yourself. Can you imagine a world like this: marriages like this; families like this; businesses like this; governments like this; and nations like this?

Can you imagine treating your enemies like this? This can only happen if we, as Christians, become so serious about our faith that we literally treat it like a life and death matter. We must become ultra-sensitive to the Holy Spirit and be in prayer as warriors, who serve Yahweh like our life is not our own. It won't be easy, but there is good reason for the hope that is in us. Even at your times of greatest need, consider what others need first; that is the best way to become a true testimony of God's love. Imagine a world like that. It may seem impossible, but it is coming.

Here are some of the key character traits that Christians who act like Christians should display. Be warmhearted and good-natured towards others. Always offer a gentle and supportive position. True love for others is best demonstrated when the needs of others become a priority over your own needs. Remember, this in particular is how you show your love for God. And it can't be an uninspired type of service to others. It is really only authentic when your care for others is passionate and meaningful, a level of commitment that one might display towards any of their greatest aspirations. But it's not just the treatment of others, but also your witness that is critical. Show the joy of the Lord in you, even in the most difficult times, as if nothing can shake your optimism because you believe with bold confidence that God is always in control—and your actions prove it. Pray fervently and continually as if this

level of intimacy with God is as essential to your survival as oxygen. And to be clear, caring for others cannot be merely lip-service; you must be available to provide the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources your fellow brothers require in their everyday lives. Open your heart; open your arms; and open your home—that should be a standing invitation. Paul has elevated his demands of us to the level of Christlike living. We must go beyond Christian soundbites and actually do the things Y'shua taught.

If you quiet your mind and read carefully, you will recognize that Paul's words in this short selection were definitely influenced by Y'shua's teachings; they seem like a compilation of some of Y'shua's sermons. One in particular seems to be prevalent, the Sermon on the Mount. You almost get the sense that Paul was there in the background, listening to Y'shua on that fateful day early in His public ministry. Straight out of the wilderness, Y'shua was already being thronged by large crowds throughout a multi-city region when He gave this famous sermon. Maybe Paul heard about Him and his curiosity got the best of him; maybe his fascination was more powerful, for a brief moment, than the religious spirit that eventually overcame him and moved him to persecute Christians. Is it possible that Paul even came across Y'shua at other times in His public ministry? Had he heard from others what Y'shua taught at the table on the night He was betrayed? One thing is certain; his

message is consistent with Y'shua's! Of course, as always, Paul also uses contributions from the Old Testament, in this instance from the wisdom of Proverbs and Deuteronomy.

The big take away here is that Paul, the “father of Christian doctrine,” was not making this stuff up. He was empowered by grace to apply wisdom to his vast knowledge of God's word, plus a profound sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and from such has emerged Christian theology. And that means, if you have been sitting on the sidelines of your faith, satisfied with being bottle fed, it's time to grow up and dive deep into the Word of God. Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. Run the race to win!”

Now let's explore Paul's “User's Guide for Christian Living.” It's Y'shua's Sermon on the Mount and Upper Room Discourse wrapped into one user-friendly handbook, a pocket guide to treating others, a brotherly love user's manual. But unlike those two lengthy sermons, the Sermon on the Mount spanning three full chapters and the Upper Room Discourse at the last supper requiring five—Y'shua's longest recorded sermon, this is just eight additional verses, bringing our total to thirteen.

The easy thing to do is to fight back. Someone hurts you and you hurt them in return; that seems altogether natural, instinctual.

But that's the thing, the greater the metamorphosis of your mind the less likely you are to react with human instincts and the greater the chance you will respond to your enemies like Christ. "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." If you are persecuted for righteousness, even better! If evil comes against you and lies about you, be joyful anyway! You are in good company; and God is using your suffering to craft you into the full image of Christ. Besides, you should not be looking for your greatest rewards on this side of eternity. Your biggest blessings are those you will receive in glory, and not only are they exponentially greater, they are permanent.

Happiness is circumstantial; joy is providential. Joy is energized by the divine; we might even say by divine foresight or intervention. In other words, joy is empowered by who God is to you and who you are to God. Once your identity is fully established then your happiness, your delight, and your pleasure will no longer be attached and dependent on circumstance. You can be temporarily happy simply knowing the Lord and knowing that He knows you and loves you. Under those conditions you can be as Paul says elsewhere, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Your compassion and empathy can know no

bounds. Under all conditions you can be available to demonstrate God's love and impart God's grace.

Paul gives four mandates in just twenty-nine words. Focus on others; establish correct priorities; refrain from making it about your own needs and accomplishments; and do not glorify yourself as if you are God's gift to mankind.

It's critically important to treat others as you wish to be treated by them. It's not an easy task, however it becomes doable if you would just remember that you can't ever become like Christ on your own. Of course you need the Holy Spirit, but more-so the Holy Spirit's focus is to empower the corporate Body of Christ to transform into His image, not the individual. Y'shua prayed that we may be perfectly unified just as He and the Father are unified. One way to practice being perfectly joined together in the same mind is to learn to come into agreement quickly—even with your adversaries.

Important questions for each of us to ask are, "Where do my priorities lie? What do I consider the things of greatest significance or highest priority?" Y'shua made the appropriate answer clear. Do not focus on building your own earthly kingdom, a life filled with temporal treasures. Instead, accumulate things that are valuable to God in eternity. In fact, don't even worry for a nanosecond about mundane things. Focus all your energy on the kingdom of God

manifesting in the earth through His people, and all the ordinary needs of life will be provided.

Humility is a supremely admirable trait. And so is its close sibling meekness. An utter dearth of humility is what fueled Satan's rebellion; he wanted to be God and he was going to make himself the supreme leader—worthy of all honor and praise. Don't be like him; be instead like Y'shua, who although He was God, humbled Himself and became a man, a servant to all of mankind. And even though He had absolute unbridled power, He kept it under control—the ultimate display of meekness.

And if you think you can do any of this on your own, you are sadly mistaken. Not even Solomon, the man touted for his unmatched wisdom, could be as beautifully adorned as the simplest of flowers. His conclusion about to whom you should abdicate was this... "Do not trust in your own wisdom; an authentic reverence for God will lead you away from sin and toward trusting in the Lord. Don't depend on your own understanding; acknowledge God in everything, and by His leading you will be guided in all things.

What is inherently wrong with the way humans relate to one another is that when one hurts the other, revenge is the instinctual response. "I will hurt you back" is oftentimes the autoresponder. Y'shua taught us differently. If someone wants to take from you, give him more! Your job is to be the light of the world and your witness

is your good works for God. Give honor to the things that are most important to God and the world will notice the difference.

Think about it. Living in a constant state of conflict is exhausting. You obviously cannot control how others act, but you can control yourself. Striving to always be in harmony with others does not make you weak; it makes you smart. Plus, Y'shua said that peacemakers are abundantly blessed. We saw this idea earlier, and it applies again here: come to agreement, as soon as possible, with those with which you have conflict; if anyone can do it it's you. Y'shua imparted His peace unto you, something even available during your greatest trials, of which Paul admonished elsewhere... "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Why defend yourself when God stands ready to do so! You need to establish only one thing, because you already learned how you are to treat your enemies and adversaries kindly. But what about God's adversaries? In The Song of Moses, Moses likens God's enemies to people who have played the harlot with other gods. Moses calls them a perverse generation, children in whom there is no faith. They have provoked Yahweh to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Yahweh to anger by their foolish idols. So, here is the simple lesson. If you are dealing with your own enemy, love them. Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate

you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. If you are dealing with God's enemies, do nothing! God will handle those who hate Him; you can just stand back and watch. When the wicked plot against God's people, their own sword shall enter their heart!

To solidify his position on how you ought to treat your enemy, Paul taps the words of Solomon directly. Provide for the needs of your enemies and the Lord will reward you. Paul does not mention the reward; you will discover that when you search the Proverb from which Paul referenced. Two things come to mind here. The first is to get a grasp on what it means to heap coals of fire on the head of your enemy. One potential explanation is that returning good for evil and being kind to your enemy may cause him to repent or change because you are fulfilling whatever need exists. This might just reverse an enemy's position, perhaps even stirring a realization about the darkness in his own heart because it is in stark contrast to your act of kindness. Another thought is that to "heap burning coals on his head" refers to a time when keeping one's hearth fire alive was a life-saving necessity. If someone could not keep their fire going, then they would go around the town, carrying some sort of container on his head, asking for hot coals to rekindle his fire. Putting coals in this container on his head would benefit him, fulfilling his need. All this is viewed by the Lord through one

filter. "I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

It all boils down to this simple but upside-down principle. We are nearing the end and there is no time for fooling around. Love others like Christ does and your love will cover a multitude of sins. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

"Think in Bible." DJH

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MESSAGE:

If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? If Christianity was a science, the observable truth would be called empirical evidence. We call it your witness. Do you know what evidence is? It is proof, confirmation, verification, substantiation, corroboration, affirmation, authentication, attestation, documentation, support for, backing for, reinforcement for, or grounds for... Are there grounds to charge you

with being a Christian? Could you be indicted and found guilty? All the evidence needed would be empirical in nature; it would be based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience, rather than theory or pure logic. In other words, is there clear observable evidence, undeniable proof, that you are indeed a Christian? Again, if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

To state the obvious, the Bible, including all of the Old Testament, plus the teachings of Christ, and all the writings of the New Testament, have been compiled as one massive constitution governing our life in the faith. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." And yet, there is this small section spanning just thirteen verses that might be the most perfect encapsulation of the Christian life. Live like it instructs and you will have so much empirical evidence of your faith that you would be found instantly guilty of all charges.

The entirety of the Bible could be considered a training manual, an instruction book, or user's guide. Ironically, even those of the secular persuasion often reference their authoritative manual as their "bible." For example, "The Electrician's Bible." User's guides, also commonly known as user's manuals, are intended to

assist users in using a particular product, service or application. It's usually written by a technician, product developer, or a company's customer service staff. It is the key external user experience document to assist users in using a given product, service or application. It is supplied by providers of a product or service to help users understand how to make the best use of the product or service. Yahweh is your manufacturer and He has provided the perfect User's Manual.

We might instead call this small segment of scripture a handbook, companion guide, reference book, guidebook, or pocket guide. Here is a list of potential names for this small section of our instruction book, titles that best describe these invaluable verses of Scripture: The Christian Guide to Life; Handbook for Christian Living; The User's Guide to Christian Living; The User's Guide to the Christian Life; User Guide to Christianity; The User's Guide to the Treatment of Others; Christian Guide to Treating Others; Christian Handbook to Treating Others; Pocket Guide to Treating Others; Pocket Guide to Practicing Your Faith; Pocket Guide to Practicing Christianity; Brotherly Love Pocket Guide; and The Christian Life Handbook. Learn it, and then understand it, and most importantly —practice it!

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

1. Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

A. Love God; Love Your Neighbor

(1) Two Greatest Commands

(a) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew).

1. “But when **the Pharisees** heard that He had silenced **the Sadducees**, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “**Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?**” Jesus said to him, “**‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’** This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: **‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.””Matthew 22:34-40 NKJV

(b) Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: You are not far from the kingdom of God. (Mark)

1. “Then **one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together**, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “**Which is the first commandment of all?**” Jesus answered him, “The first

of all the commandments is: **'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.** And you shall **love the Lord your God** with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** There is no other commandment greater than these." So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for **there is one God**, and there is no other but He. And **to love Him** with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, **and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.**" Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, **"You are not far from the kingdom of God."** But after that no one dared question Him." Mark 12:28-34 NKJV

(c) Was Y'shua inventing a new religion with new laws and new priorities when being interrogated by religious leaders?

1. **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is **profitable for** doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **that the man of God**

may be complete, **thoroughly equipped** for every good work." II Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV

(2) Source Material

(a) Commandment #1: Love God! (Deuteronomy)

1. **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.** “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall **teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NKJV

(b) Commandment #2: Love your neighbor! (Leviticus)

1. **“You shall not hate your brother in your heart.** You shall **surely rebuke your neighbor**, and **not bear sin because of him.** You shall **not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge** against the children of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:17-18 NKJV

2. Critical Alert!

- a) If you simply begin in second half of verse 18, *“you shall love your neighbor as yourself”* you will complete miss what loving your neighbor looks like.
- b) As always, it is critical to explore the scriptures from which Y’shua draws His source material (Do this for all New Testament teachings).
- c) True love of one’s neighbor begins in verse 17 and includes the first half of 18.
 - 1) **Don’t hate your brother in your heart** (by avoiding the following)...
 - 2) **Rebuke your neighbor for his sin** (don’t stand by and watch without intervening)...
 - 3) **Don’t accept his sin** (to preserve your relationship, as if you are doing him a favor)...
 - 4) Doing so would be a vengeful act as if you are resentful or have ill will for your brother.

(3) What is Love?

(a) God is love...

1. “He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.** {16} And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. **God is love,** and he who

abides in love abides in God, and God in him." I

John 4:8, 16 NKJV

(b) The Bond of Perfection

1. "**But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.** And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:14-17 NKJV

(c) The bond of perfection is our calling...

1. "Therefore you shall **be perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48 NKJV

(d) His Divine Nature

1. "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the **divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." II Peter 1:4 NKJV

(e) Love is...

1. "Love **suffers long** and is **kind**; love **does not envy**; love **does not parade itself**, is **not puffed up**; does **not behave rudely**, does **not seek its own**, is **not provoked**, **thinks no evil**; does **not rejoice in iniquity**, but **rejoices in the truth**; **bears all things**, **believes all things**, **hopes all things**, **endures all things**. Love **never fails...** " I Corinthians 13:4-8 NKJV

(4) What does loving God look like: Love & Obedience

(a) If you Love God you'd obey Him...

1. "**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**" John 14:15 NKJV
2. "**He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.** And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." John 14:21 NKJV
3. "Jesus answered and said to him, "**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word**; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. **He who does not love Me does not keep My words**; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." John 14:23-24 NKJV

(5) Love God by Loving Others

(a) Love one another as He loves you. This is how you recognize disciples.

1. “A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another; as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**” John 13:34-35 NKJV

(b) If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another!

1. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we 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.**” I John 4:7-11 NKJV

(c) By this we know that we know Him...

1. “**Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps**

His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.

By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him **ought himself also to walk just as He walked.** Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. **He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness** until now. **He who loves his brother** abides in the light, and there is **no cause for stumbling in him.** But **he who hates his brother is in darkness** and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the **darkness has blinded his eyes.**" 1 John 2:3-11 NKJV

2. Can you see it?

- a) *“**You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your***

neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” Leviticus
19:17-18 NKJV

- 1) If know Him, obey His commands; if you don't you are a liar! (Leviticus 19:17-18 is a command!)
 - 2) That is how the love of God is perfected in you!
 - 3) Y'shua was our perfect example so walk just as He walked.
 - 4) This is nothing new—it's always been about loving God and loving your neighbor. That is why... *“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”* Matthew 22:40
- b) If you say you love God but hate your brother (by tolerating his sin) you are deceived...
- 1) If you love him you won't be part of his stumbling (that would be hating him!)
 - 2) If you believe otherwise you are walking in darkness and the darkness has blinded your eyes.
- (d) In the end it is all about preferring others!
1. “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-

minded, **having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**" Philippians 2:1-4 NKJV

USER GUIDE TO CHRISTIANITY

2. Pocket Guide to Practicing Your Faith

A. Practice Makes Perfect

(1) Add to your faith

(a) The Goal is Love

1. "But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence, add to your faith** virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to **brotherly kindness love.** For **if these things are yours and abound,** you will be **neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." II Peter 1:5-9
NKJV

B. Christian Handbook on Treating Others

(1) The Christian Guide to Life

(a) Imagine a world in which people lived in such a way and considered others as described in these attending verses.

1. “Let **love** be without **hypocrisy**. **Abhor** what is **evil**. **Cling to** what is **good**.” Romans 12:9 NKJV

2. It might seem cliché, but love is the answer.

a) God is love and if you truly love God the way He loves you, you will love others as God does, as this is precisely what identifies His followers.

1) “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.***” John 13:34-35 NKJV

b) Love is what encapsulates the sum of every commandment in the Bible, in fact if asked to recite all of God’s law standing on one foot and doing so in one breath, you’d say, “Love God and love your neighbor.” [See Section One]

c) Brewing deep within your neural network, that seemingly infinite number of neurons wired and

rewired in your brain, is the ever-increasing and complex web of nerves that each stretch to make intimate connections with more and more of its cousins, until your entire brain is rewired to think like God.

- d) This metamorphosis of your brain, this radical transformation of how you think must be relentless.
 - 1) See [Beyond Salvation](#): “...*be transformed by the renewing of your mind...*” Romans 12:2
- e) Anything short of a tenacious pursuit of such will yield only hypocritical results—the say one thing, do another sort. We can’t have that!
- f) In fact representing that you represent God and acting otherwise might be the most malignant type of evil.
- g) Instead, abhor evil, hate it with a passion; and cling to what is good, pure, righteous and holy.
 - 1) “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst **for righteousness**, For they shall be filled.*” Matthew 5:6 NKJV
- h) Bind yourself to what is virtuous to such a degree that it is literally impossible to be separated from it.

- 1) Like two of the most delicate pieces of tissue paper glued together with an epoxy, so strong that they can withstand a thousand times a thousand pounds of pulling.
- 2) Even if they could be pulled apart, these two feathery parchments could never be distinguished one from another.
- 3) That is the level of commitment to love that God expects. In practice, this is what that would look like:

(2) The User's Guide on the Treatment of Others

(a) Let kindness and affection, caring and compassion, a desire to serve and meekness, rule over your relationships in such a way that it is obvious you care more about others than yourself.

1. "Be **kindly affectionate** to one another **with brotherly love**, in honor giving **preference to one another**; not lagging in **diligence**, **fervent in spirit**, **serving** the Lord; **rejoicing in hope**, **patient in tribulation**, continuing **steadfastly in prayer**; **distributing to the needs of the saints**, given to **hospitality**." Romans 12:10-13 NKJV

2. Can you imagine a world like this:

- a) Marriages like this; families like this; businesses like this; governments like this; and nations like this?
- b) Can you imagine treating your enemies like this?
- c) This can only happen if we, as Christians, become so serious about our faith that we literally treat it like a life and death matter.
- d) We must become ultra-sensitive to the Holy Spirit and be in prayer as warriors, who serve Yahweh like our life is not our own.
- e) It won't be easy, but there is good reason for the hope that is in us.
 - 1) *“And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you**, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it*

*is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” 1 Peter 3:13-17
NKJV*

- f) Even at your times of greatest need, consider what others need first; that is the best way to become a true testimony of God’s love.
 - g) Imagine a world like that. It may seem impossible, but it is coming.
3. Here are some of the key character traits that Christians who act like Christians should display.
- a) Be warmhearted and good-natured towards others.
 - b) Always offer a gentle and supportive position.
 - c) True love for others is best demonstrated when the needs of others become a priority over your own needs.
 - d) Remember, this in particular is how you show your love for God.
 - e) And it can’t be an uninspired type of service to others.
 - f) It is really only authentic when your care for others is passionate and meaningful, a level of commitment that one might display towards any of their greatest aspirations.

4. But it's not just the treatment of others, but also your witness that is critical.
 - a) Show the joy of the Lord in you, even in the most difficult times, as if nothing can shake your optimism because you believe with bold confidence that God is always in control—and your actions prove it.
 - b) Pray fervently and continually as if this level of intimacy with God is as essential to your survival as oxygen.
 - c) And to be clear, caring for others cannot be merely lip-service; you must be available to provide the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources your fellow brothers require in their everyday lives.
 - d) Open your heart; open your arms; and open your home—that should be a standing invitation.
 - e) Paul has elevated his demands of us to the level of Christlike living. We must go beyond Christian soundbites and actually do the things Y'shua taught.

(3) "...given to ***hospitality***." Romans 12:13

- (a) This reminds us of the story Mary and Martha and how it is necessary to be careful in your ministry of hospitality.
1. “Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. **But Martha was distracted with much serving,** and she approached Him and said, **“Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”** And Jesus answered and said to her, **“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part,** which will not be taken away from her.”” Luke 10:38-42 NKJV

C. Paul’s Sermon on the Mount and Upper Room Discourse

- (1) The Users Manual to Christian Living
- (a) If you quiet your mind and read carefully, you will recognize that Paul’s words in this short selection were definitely influenced by Y’shua’s teachings; they seem like a compilation of some of Y’shua’s sermons.

(b) And Paul admonished us to live life as he did because he was living life like Y'shua did, as did John.

1. **"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."** I

Corinthians 11:1 NKJV

2. **"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."** I John 2:6 NKJV

3. One particular sermon seems to be prevalent from which Paul is borrowing the instructions for such—the Sermon on the Mount.

a) You almost get the sense that Paul was there in the background, listening to Y'shua on that fateful day early in His public ministry.

b) Straight out of the wilderness, Y'shua was already being thronged by large crowds throughout a multi-city region when He gave this famous sermon.

c) Maybe Paul heard about Him and his curiosity got the best of him; maybe his fascination was more powerful, for a brief moment, than the religious spirit that eventually overcame him and moved him to persecute Christians.

d) Is it possible that Paul even came across Y'shua at other times in His public ministry?

- e) Had he heard from others what Y'shua taught at the table on the night He was betrayed?
 - f) One thing is certain; his message is consistent with Y'shua's!
 - g) Of course, as always, Paul also uses contributions from the Old Testament, in this instance from the wisdom of Proverbs and Deuteronomy.
4. The big take away here is that Paul, the "father of Christian doctrine," was not making this stuff up.
- a) He was empowered by grace to apply wisdom to his vast knowledge of God's word, plus a profound sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and from such has emerged Christian theology.
 - b) That means, if you have been sitting on the sidelines of your faith, satisfied with being bottle fed, it's time to grow up and dive deep into the Word of God.
 - c) Again, Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
5. What did that look like for Paul?
- a) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?

b) Run in such a way that you may obtain it. Run the race to win!"

1) *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may obtain it.** And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**"* I Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV

6. Now let's explore Paul's "User's Guide for Christian Living."

a) It's Y'shua's Sermon on the Mount and Upper Room Discourse wrapped into one user-friendly handbook, a pocket guide to treating others, a brotherly love user's manual.

b) But unlike those two lengthy sermons, the Sermon on the Mount spanning three full chapters and the Upper Room Discourse at the last supper requiring

five—Y’shua’s longest recorded sermon, this is just eight additional verses, bringing our total to thirteen.

(2) Pocket Guide to the Practice of Christianity

(a) An equal but opposite response!

1. “**Bless those who persecute you;** bless and do not curse.” Romans 12:14 NKJV

2. The easy thing to do is to fight back.

a) Someone hurts you and you hurt them in return; that seems altogether natural, instinctual.

b) But that’s the thing, the greater the metamorphosis of your mind the less likely you are to react with human instincts and the greater the chance you will respond to your enemies like Christ.

1) ““You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ {44} **But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,** {45} that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For **if you love those**

*who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.***” Matthew 5:43-48 NKJV

- c) If you are persecuted for righteousness, even better! If evil comes against you and lies about you, be joyful anyway! You are in good company; and God is using your suffering to craft you into the full image of Christ.
 - 1) “**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake**, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “**Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you**, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely **for My sake**. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for **great is your reward in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:10-12 NKJV
 - 2) You should not be looking for your greatest rewards on this side of eternity.

3) Your biggest blessings are those you will receive in glory, and not only are they exponentially greater, they are permanent.

(3) Pocket Guide to Treating Others

(a) Happiness is circumstantial; joy is providential.

1. “**Rejoice** with those who rejoice, and **weep** with those who weep.”Romans 12:15 NKJV

2. Joy is energized by the divine; we might even say by divine foresight or intervention.

a) In other words, joy is empowered by who God is to you and who you are to God.

b) Once your identity is fully established then your happiness, your delight, and your pleasure will no longer be attached and dependent on circumstance.

c) You can be temporally happy simply knowing the Lord and knowing that He knows you and loves you.

1) “*Blessed are those who mourn, For **they shall be comforted.***” Matthew 5:4 NKJV

3. Under those conditions you can be as Paul says elsewhere...

- a) "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."
- 1) *"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. **I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.** Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."* I Corinthians 9:19-23 NKJV
- b) Your compassion and empathy can know no bounds.
- 1) *""**These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love*

has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." John 15:11-13 NKJV

c) Under all conditions you can be available to demonstrate God's love and impart God's grace.

1) *"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may **impart grace** to the hearers."* Ephesians 4:29 NKJV

(4) Handbook for Christian Living

(a) Paul gives four mandates in just twenty-nine words.

1. "Be of the **same mind toward one another**. Do not set your mind on **high things**, but **associate with the humble**. Do **not** be **wise in your own opinion**."

Romans 12:16 NKJV

2. Also twenty-nine words...

a) Focus on others; establish correct priorities; refrain from making it about your own needs and accomplishments; and do not glorify yourself as if you are God's gift to mankind.

3. It's critically important to treat others as you wish to be treated by them.

- a) The Golden Rule: Do unto others... (Again, how you treat others is the way love is expressed to them and to God!)
- 1) *“Therefore, **whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**”* Matthew 7:12 NKJV
 - 2) *““But I say to you who hear: **Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.** To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. {31}**And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.** “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For*

even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” Luke 6:27-36 NKJV

4. It's not an easy task, however it becomes doable if you would just remember that you can't ever become like Christ on your own.
 - a) Of course you need the Holy Spirit, but more-so the Holy Spirit's focus is to empower the corporate Body of Christ to transform into His image, not the individual.
 - b) Y'shua prayed that we may be perfectly unified just as He and the Father are unified.
 - 1) *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as***

We are one: *I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*” John 17:20-23 NKJV

- c) One way to practice being perfectly joined together in the same mind is to learn to come into agreement quickly—even with your adversaries.
5. Important questions for each of us to ask:
- a) “Where do my priorities lie? What do I consider the things of greatest significance or highest priority?”
 - b) Y’shua made the appropriate answer clear. *“Do not set your mind on **high things...**”*
 - 1) *“**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,** where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**”* Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV

2) *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** Therefore **do not worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”* Matthew 6:31-34 NKJV

3) Do not focus on building your own earthly kingdom, a life filled with temporal treasures. Instead, accumulate things that are valuable to God in eternity. In fact, don't even worry for a nanosecond about mundane things. Focus all your energy on the kingdom of God manifesting in the earth through His people, and all the ordinary needs of life will be provided.

6. Humility is a supremely admirable trait. *Associate with the **humble...***

a) And so is its close sibling meekness.

1) *“**Blessed are the meek,** For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst*

for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”

Matthew 5:5-6 NKJV

b) An utter dearth of humility is what fueled Satan’s rebellion; he wanted to be God and he was going to make himself the supreme leader—worthy of all honor and praise.

1) *“**How you are fallen** from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: **‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’** Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.”* Isaiah 14:12-15 NKJV

c) Don’t be like him; be instead like Y’shua, who although He was God, humbled Himself and became a man, a servant to all of mankind.

1) *“**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,*

*but made Himself of no reputation, **taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.** And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV*

d) And even though He had absolute unbridled power, He kept it under control—the ultimate display of meekness.

1) *“But Jesus said to him [Peter, John 18:10], “**Put your sword in its place,** for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or **do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?** How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”” Matthew 26:52-54 NKJV*

7. And if you think you can do any of this on your own, you are sadly mistaken. *Do **not be wise in your own opinion...***

a) Not even Solomon, the man touted for his unmatched wisdom, could be as beautifully adorned as the simplest of flowers.

1) *“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”*
Matthew 6:28-30 NKJV

b) Solomon’s conclusion about to whom you should abdicate was this...

1) *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.”* Proverbs 3:5-7 NKJV

2) Do not trust in your own wisdom; an authentic reverence for God will lead you away from sin and toward trusting in the Lord.

3) Don’t depend on your own understanding; acknowledge God in everything, and by His leading you will be guided in all things.

8. The admonition was to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.

a) *“Finally, all of you **be of one mind**, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”* I Peter 3:8-9 NKJ

b) *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be **perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the same judgment.”* I Corinthians 1:10 NKJV

c) *“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, **be of one mind**, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”* II Corinthians 13:11 NKJV

d) *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, **being of one accord, of one mind**.”* Philippians 2:1-2 NKJV

(5) Handbook for Treating Others

(a) What is inherently wrong with the way humans relate to one another is that when one hurts the other, revenge is the instinctual response.

1. **“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.”** Romans 12:17 NKJV

2. “I will hurt you back” is oftentimes the autoresponder.

a) Y’shua taught us differently.

b) If someone wants to take from you, give him more!

1) *““You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ **But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.**”* Matthew 5:38-42 NKJV

c) Your job is to be the light of the world and your witness is your good works for God. Give honor to

the things that are most important to God and the world will notice the difference.

- 1) *“**You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. **You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**”***

Matthew 5:13-16 NKJV

(6) Pocket Guide to Practicing Your Faith

- (a) Think about it. Living in a constant state of conflict is exhausting.
 1. “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, **live peaceably with all men.**” Romans 12:18 NKJV
 2. You obviously cannot control how others act, but you can control yourself.
 - a) Striving to always be in harmony with others does not make you weak; it makes you smart.

b) Plus, Y'shua said that peacemakers are abundantly blessed.

1) "**Blessed are the peacemakers**, For they shall be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9 NKJV

c) We saw this idea earlier, and it applies again here: come to agreement, as soon as possible, with those with which you have conflict; if anyone can do it it's you.

1) "**Agree with your adversary quickly**, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny." Matthew 5:25-26 NKJV

d) Y'shua imparted His peace unto you, something even available during your greatest trials.

1) "**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you**; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27 NKJV

2) "These things I have spoken to you, **that in Me you may have peace**. In the world you will have

*tribulation; but **be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***”” John 16:33 NKJV

e) Paul admonished elsewhere...

1) *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**”* Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

(7) Christian Guide to Treating Others

(a) Why defend yourself when God stands ready to do so!

1. *“Beloved, **do not avenge yourselves**, but rather **give place to wrath**; for it is written, **“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.**”* Romans 12:19 NKJV

2. You need to establish only one thing, because you already learned how you are to treat your enemies and adversaries kindly.

a) But what about God’s adversaries?

b) In The Song of Moses, Moses likens God’s enemies to people who have played the harlot with other gods.

- c) Moses calls them a perverse generation, children in whom there is no faith.
- d) They have provoked Yahweh to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Yahweh to anger by their foolish idols.
- e) The Song of Moses
 - 1) *“And the Lord said to Moses: “Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and **this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods** of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and **they will forsake Me and break My covenant** which I have made with them. **Then My anger shall be aroused against them** in that day, and **I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them**, and they shall be devoured. And **many evils and troubles shall befall them**, so that they will say in that day, ‘**Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?**’”* Deuteronomy 31:16-17 NKJV
 - 2) *““Now therefore, **write down this song** for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song **may be a***

witness for Me against the children of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 31:19 NKJV

- 3) “Then **Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly** of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:” Deuteronomy 31:30 NKJV
- 4) “And He said: ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, **For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith. They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols.** But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. **For a fire is kindled in My anger,** And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. ‘I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. They shall be wasted with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within For the

young man and virgin, The nursing child with
the man of gray hairs. I would have said, "I will
dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of
them to cease from among men," Had I not
feared the wrath of the enemy, Lest their
adversaries should misunderstand, Lest they
should say, "Our hand is high; And it is not the
Lord who has done all this." ' "**For they are a
nation void of counsel, Nor is there any
understanding in them.** Oh, that they were
wise, that they understood this, That they would
consider their latter end! How could one chase
a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them, And the Lord
had surrendered them? For their rock is not like
our Rock, Even our enemies themselves being
judges. For their vine is of the vine of Sodom
And of the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are
grapes of gall, Their clusters are bitter. Their wine
is the poison of serpents, And the cruel venom
of cobras. 'Is this not laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up among My treasures? {35} Vengeance
is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in

*due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.’ “For the Lord will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their power is gone, And there is no one remaining, bond or free. He will say: ‘Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, And be your refuge. ‘Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, “As I live forever, {41} If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, **I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those who hate Me.** I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy.” ’ {43} “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge*

the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.” So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people.” Deuteronomy 32:20-44 NKJV

3. So, here is the simple lesson.

- a) If you are dealing with your own enemy, love them.
- b) Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.
- c) If you are dealing with God’s enemies, do nothing! God will handle those who hate Him; you can just stand back and watch. When the wicked plot against God’s people, their own sword shall enter their heart!

1) *“For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth. **For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more**; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. **But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight***

*themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct. **Their sword shall enter their own heart, And their bows shall be broken.***" Psalms 37:9-15 NKJV

(8) Brotherly Love Users Manual

(a) To solidify his position on how you ought to treat your enemy, Paul taps the words of Solomon directly.

1. "Therefore **"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink;** For in so doing you will **heap coals of fire** on his head."" Romans 12:20 NKJV

2. Provide for the needs of your enemies and the Lord will reward you.

a) Paul does not mention the reward; you will discover that when you search the Proverb from which Paul referenced.

1) *"If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, **And***

the LORD will reward you.” Proverbs 25:21-22

NKJV

3. Two things come to mind here.
 - a) The first is to get a grasp on what it means to heap coals of fire on the head of your enemy.
 - 1) One potential explanation is that returning good for evil and being kind to your enemy may cause him to repent or change because you are fulfilling whatever need exists.
 - 2) This might just reverse an enemy’s position, perhaps even stirring a realization about the darkness in his own heart because it is in stark contrast to your act of kindness.
 - b) Another thought is that to “heap burning coals on his head” refers to a time when keeping one’s hearth fire alive was a life-saving necessity.
 - 1) If someone could not keep their fire going, then they would go around the town, carrying some sort of container on his head, asking for hot coals to rekindle his fire.
 - 2) Putting coals in this container on his head would benefit him, fulfilling his need.
4. All this is viewed by the Lord through one filter.

a) "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

1) *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.**'* "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, '**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**' "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: **for I was hungry and you gave Me no**

food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”” Matthew 25:34-46 NKJV

(9) Christian Life Handbook

- (a) It all boils down to this simple but upside-down principle.
 - 1. “Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good.**” Romans 12:21 NKJV
 - 2. We are nearing the end and there is no time for fooling around.
 - a) Love others like Christ does and your love will cover a multitude of sins.

- 1) *“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for **“love will cover a multitude of sins.”**”* I Peter 4:7-8 NKJV
- b) And putting it all together in one concept! Live like this and you will have all the evidence you need to be convicted as a Christian!
 - 1) *“**“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’** But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’** But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your*

Father in heaven;** for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:38-48 NKJV

c) Bookends:

- 1) “Let **love** be without **hypocrisy**. **Abhor** what is **evil**. **Cling to** what is **good**.” Romans 12:9 NKJV
- 2) “Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**.” Romans 12:21 NKJV

Summary: THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

1. Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

A. Love God; Love Your Neighbor

(1) Two Greatest Commands

- (a) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew).

- (b) Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: You are not far from the kingdom of God. (Mark)
- (c) Was Y'shua inventing a new religion with new laws and new priorities when being interrogated by religious leaders?

(2) Source Material

- (a) Commandment #1: Love God! (Deuteronomy)
- (b) Commandment #2: Love your neighbor! (Leviticus)

1. Critical Alert!

- a) If you simply begin in second half of verse 18, *“you shall love your neighbor as yourself”* you will complete miss what loving your neighbor looks like.
- b) As always, it is critical to explore the scriptures from which Y'shua draws His source material (Do this for all New Testament teachings).
- c) True love of one's neighbor begins in verse 17 and includes the first half of 18.
 - 1) **Don't hate your brother in your heart** (by avoiding the following)...
 - 2) **Rebuke your neighbor for his sin** (don't stand by and watch without intervening)...

- 3) **Don't accept his sin** (to preserve your relationship, as if you are doing him a favor)...
- 4) Doing so would be a vengeful act as if you are resentful or have ill will for your brother.

(3) What is Love?

- (a) God is love...
- (b) The Bond of Perfection
- (c) The bond of perfection is our calling...
- (d) His Divine Nature
- (e) Love is...

(4) What does loving God look like: Love & Obedience

- (a) If you Love God you'd obey Him...

(5) Love God by Loving Others

- (a) Love one another as He loves you. This is how you recognize disciples.
- (b) If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another!
- (c) By this we know that we know Him...

1. Can you see it?

- a) If you know Him, obey His commands; if you don't you are a liar! (Leviticus 19:17-18 is a command!)
 - 1) That is how the love of God is perfected in you!
 - 2) Y'shua was our perfect example so walk just as He walked.

- 3) This is nothing new—it's always been about loving God and loving your neighbor. That is why... *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* Matthew 22:40
- b) If you say you love God but hate your brother (by tolerating his sin) you are deceived...
 - 1) If you love him you won't be part of his stumbling (that would be hating him!)
 - 2) If you believe otherwise you are walking in darkness and the darkness has blinded your eyes.
- (d) In the end it is all about preferring others!

Summary: USER GUIDE TO CHRISTIANITY

2. Pocket Guide to Practicing Your Faith

A. Practice Makes Perfect

- (1) Add to your faith
 - (a) The Goal is Love

B. Christian Handbook on Treating Others

- (1) The Christian Guide to Life
 - (a) Imagine a world in which people lived in such a way and considered others as described in these attending verses.

1. It might seem cliché, but love is the answer.
 - a) God is love and if you truly love God the way He loves you, you will love others as God does, as this is precisely what identifies His followers.
 - b) Love is what encapsulates the sum of every commandment in the Bible, in fact if asked to recite all of God's law standing on one foot and doing so in one breath, you'd say, "Love God and love your neighbor." [See Section One]
 - c) Brewing deep within your neural network, that seemingly infinite number of neurons wired and rewired in your brain, is the ever-increasing and complex web of nerves that each stretch to make intimate connections with more and more of its cousins, until your entire brain is rewired to think like God.
 - d) This metamorphosis of your brain, this radical transformation of how you think must be relentless.
 - 1) See [Beyond Salvation](#): "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Romans 12:2

- e) Anything short of a tenacious pursuit of such will yield only hypocritical results—the say one thing, do another sort. We can't have that!
- f) In fact representing that you represent God and acting otherwise might be the most malignant type of evil.
- g) Instead, abhor evil, hate it with a passion; and cling to what is good, and pure, and righteous and holy.
- h) Bind yourself to what is virtuous to such a degree that it is literally impossible to be separated from it.
 - 1) Like two of the most delicate pieces of tissue paper glued together with an epoxy, so strong that they can withstand a thousand times a thousand pounds of pulling.
 - 2) Even if they could be pulled apart, these two feathery parchments could never be distinguished one from another.
 - 3) That is the level of commitment to love that God expects. In practice, this is what that would look like:

(2) The User's Guide on the Treatment of Others

(a) Let kindness and affection, caring and compassion, a desire to serve and meekness, rule over your relationships in such a way that it is obvious you care more about others than yourself.

1. Can you imagine a world like this:

a) Marriages like this; families like this; businesses like this; governments like this; and nations like this?

b) Can you imagine treating your enemies like this?

c) This can only happen if we, as Christians, become so serious about our faith that we literally treat it like a life and death matter.

d) We must become ultra-sensitive to the Holy Spirit and be in prayer as warriors, who serve Yahweh like our life is not our own.

e) It won't be easy, but there is good reason for the hope that is in us.

f) Even at your times of greatest need, consider what others need first; that is the best way to become a true testimony of God's love.

g) Imagine a world like that. It may seem impossible, but it is coming.

2. Here are some of the key character traits that Christians who act like Christians should display.
 - a) Be warmhearted and good-natured towards others.
 - b) Always offer a gentle and supportive position.
 - c) True love for others is best demonstrated when the needs of others become a priority over your own needs.
 - d) Remember, this in particular is how you show your love for God.
 - e) And it can't be an uninspired type of service to others.
 - f) It is really only authentic when your care for others is passionate and meaningful, a level of commitment that one might display towards any of their greatest aspirations.
3. But it's not just the treatment of others, but also your witness that is critical.
 - a) Show the joy of the Lord in you, even in the most difficult times, as if nothing can shake your optimism because you believe with bold confidence that God is always in control—and your actions prove it.

- b) Pray fervently and continually as if this level of intimacy with God is as essential to your survival as oxygen.
- c) And to be clear, caring for others cannot be merely lip-service; you must be available to provide the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources your fellow brothers require in their everyday lives.
- d) Open your heart; open your arms; and open your home—that should be a standing invitation.
- e) Paul has elevated his demands of us to the level of Christlike living. We must go beyond Christian soundbites and actually do the things Y’shua taught.

(3) “...*given to **hospitality**.*” Romans 12:13

- (a) This reminds us of the story Mary and Martha and how it is necessary to be careful in your ministry of hospitality.

C. Paul’s Sermon on the Mount and Upper Room Discourse

(1) The Users Manual to Christian Living

- (a) If you quiet your mind and read carefully, you will recognize that Paul’s words in this short selection were definitely influenced by Y’shua’s teachings; they seem like a compilation of some of Y’shua’s sermons.

- (b) And Paul admonished us to live life as he did because he was living life like Y'shua did, as did John.
1. One particular sermon seems to be prevalent from which Paul is borrowing the instructions for such—the Sermon on the Mount.
 - a) You almost get the sense that Paul was there in the background, listening to Y'shua on that fateful day early in His public ministry.
 - b) Straight out of the wilderness, Y'shua was already being thronged by large crowds throughout a multi-city region when He gave this famous sermon.
 - c) Maybe Paul heard about Him and his curiosity got the best of him; maybe his fascination was more powerful, for a brief moment, than the religious spirit that eventually overcame him and moved him to persecute Christians.
 - d) Is it possible that Paul even came across Y'shua at other times in His public ministry?
 - e) Had he heard from others what Y'shua taught at the table on the night He was betrayed?
 - f) One thing is certain; his message is consistent with Y'shua's!

- g) Of course, as always, Paul also uses contributions from the Old Testament, in this instance from the wisdom of Proverbs and Deuteronomy.
2. The big take away here is that Paul, the “father of Christian doctrine,” was not making this stuff up.
 - a) He was empowered by grace to apply wisdom to his vast knowledge of God’s word, plus a profound sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and from such has emerged Christian theology.
 - b) That means, if you have been sitting on the sidelines of your faith, satisfied with being bottle fed, it’s time to grow up and dive deep into the Word of God.
 - c) Again, Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
 3. What did that look like for Paul?
 - a) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?
 - b) Run in such a way that you may obtain it. Run the race to win!”
 4. Now let’s explore Paul’s “User’s Guide for Christian Living.”

- a) It's Y'shua's Sermon on the Mount and Upper Room Discourse wrapped into one user-friendly handbook, a pocket guide to treating others, a brotherly love user's manual.
- b) But unlike those two lengthy sermons, the Sermon on the Mount spanning three full chapters and the Upper Room Discourse at the last supper requiring five—Y'shua's longest recorded sermon, this is just eight additional verses, bringing our total to thirteen.

(2) Pocket Guide to the Practice of Christianity

- (a) An equal but opposite response!
 - 1. The easy thing to do is to fight back.
 - a) Someone hurts you and you hurt them in return; that seems altogether natural, instinctual.
 - b) But that's the thing, the greater the metamorphosis of your mind the less likely you are to react with human instincts and the greater the chance you will respond to your enemies like Christ.
 - c) If you are persecuted for righteousness, even better! If evil comes against you and lies about you, be joyful anyway! You are in good company;

and God is using your suffering to craft you into the full image of Christ.

- 1) You should not be looking for your greatest rewards on this side of eternity.
- 2) Your biggest blessings are those you will receive in glory, and not only are they exponentially greater, they are permanent.

(3) Pocket Guide to Treating Others

(a) Happiness is circumstantial; joy is providential.

1. Joy is energized by the divine; we might even say by divine foresight or intervention.
 - a) In other words, joy is empowered by who God is to you and who you are to God.
 - b) Once your identity is fully established then your happiness, your delight, and your pleasure will no longer be attached and dependent on circumstance.
 - c) You can be temporally happy simply knowing the Lord and knowing that He knows you and loves you.
2. Under those conditions you can be as Paul says elsewhere...

- a) "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."
- b) Your compassion and empathy can know no bounds.
- c) Under all conditions you can be available to demonstrate God's love and impart God's grace.

(4) Handbook for Christian Living

- (a) Paul gives four mandates in just twenty-nine words.
 - 1. Also twenty-nine words...
 - a) Focus on others; establish correct priorities; refrain from making it about your own needs and accomplishments; and do not glorify yourself as if you are God's gift to mankind.
 - 2. It's critically important to treat others as you wish to be treated by them.
 - a) The Golden Rule: Do unto others... (Again, how you treat others is the way love is expressed to them and to God!)
 - 3. It's not an easy task, however it becomes doable if you would just remember that you can't ever become like Christ on your own.
 - a) Of course you need the Holy Spirit, but more-so the Holy Spirit's focus is to empower the corporate

Body of Christ to transform into His image, not the individual.

- b) Y'shua prayed that we may be perfectly unified just as He and the Father are unified.
 - c) One way to practice being perfectly joined together in the same mind is to learn to come into agreement quickly—even with your adversaries.
4. Important questions for each of us to ask:
- a) “Where do my priorities lie? What do I consider the things of greatest significance or highest priority?”
 - b) Y'shua made the appropriate answer clear. *“Do not set your mind on **high things...**”*
 - 1) Do not focus on building your own earthly kingdom, a life filled with temporal treasures. Instead, accumulate things that are valuable to God in eternity. In fact, don't even worry for a nanosecond about mundane things. Focus all your energy on the kingdom of God manifesting in the earth through His people, and all the ordinary needs of life will be provided.
5. Humility is a supremely admirable trait. *Associate with the **humble...***

- a) And so is its close sibling meekness.
 - b) An utter dearth of humility is what fueled Satan's rebellion; he wanted to be God and he was going to make himself the supreme leader—worthy of all honor and praise.
 - c) Don't be like him; be instead like Y'shua, who although He was God, humbled Himself and became a man, a servant to all of mankind.
 - d) And even though He had absolute unbridled power, He kept it under control—the ultimate display of meekness.
6. And if you think you can do any of this on your own, you are sadly mistaken. *Do **not** be **wise in your own opinion...***
- a) Not even Solomon, the man touted for his unmatched wisdom, could be as beautifully adorned as the simplest of flowers.
 - b) Solomon's conclusion about to whom you should abdicate was this...
 - 1) Do not trust in your own wisdom; an authentic reverence for God will lead you away from sin and toward trusting in the Lord.

2) Don't depend on your own understanding; acknowledge God in everything, and by His leading you will be guided in all things.

7. The admonition was to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.

(5) Handbook for Treating Others

(a) What is inherently wrong with the way humans relate to one another is that when one hurts the other, revenge is the instinctual response.

1. "I will hurt you back" is oftentimes the autoresponder.

a) Y'shua taught us differently.

b) If someone wants to take from you, give him more!

c) Your job is to be the light of the world and your witness is your good works for God. Give honor to the things that are most important to God and the world will notice the difference.

(6) Pocket Guide to Practicing Your Faith

(a) Think about it. Living in a constant state of conflict is exhausting.

1. You obviously cannot control how others act, but you can control yourself.

- a) Striving to always be in harmony with others does not make you weak; it makes you smart.
- b) Plus, Y'shua said that peacemakers are abundantly blessed.
- c) We saw this idea earlier, and it applies again here: come to agreement, as soon as possible, with those with which you have conflict; if anyone can do it it's you.
- d) Y'shua imparted His peace unto you, something even available during your greatest trials.
- e) Paul admonished elsewhere...

(7) Christian Guide to Treating Others

- (a) Why defend yourself when God stands ready to do so!
 - 1. You need to establish only one thing, because you already learned how you are to treat your enemies and adversaries kindly.
 - a) But what about God's adversaries?
 - b) In The Song of Moses, Moses likens God's enemies to people who have played the harlot with other gods.
 - c) Moses calls them a perverse generation, children in whom there is no faith.

d) They have provoked Yahweh to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Yahweh to anger by their foolish idols.

e) The Song of Moses

2. So, here is the simple lesson.

a) If you are dealing with your own enemy, love them.

b) Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

c) If you are dealing with God's enemies, do nothing! God will handle those who hate Him; you can just stand back and watch. When the wicked plot against God's people, their own sword shall enter their heart!

(8) Brotherly Love Users Manual

(a) To solidify his position on how you ought to treat your enemy, Paul taps the words of Solomon directly.

1. Provide for the needs of your enemies and the Lord will reward you.

a) Paul does not mention the reward; you will discover that when you search the Proverb from which Paul referenced.

2. Two things come to mind here.
 - a) The first is to get a grasp on what it means to heap coals of fire on the head of your enemy.
 - 1) One potential explanation is that returning good for evil and being kind to your enemy may cause him to repent or change because you are fulfilling whatever need exists.
 - 2) This might just reverse an enemy's position, perhaps even stirring a realization about the darkness in his own heart because it is in stark contrast to your act of kindness.
 - b) Another thought is that to "heap burning coals on his head" refers to a time when keeping one's hearth fire alive was a life-saving necessity.
 - 1) If someone could not keep their fire going, then they would go around the town, carrying some sort of container on his head, asking for hot coals to rekindle his fire.
 - 2) Putting coals in this container on his head would benefit him, fulfilling his need.
3. All this is viewed by the Lord through one filter.
 - a) "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

(9) Christian Life Handbook

(a) It all boils down to this simple but upside-down principle.

1. We are nearing the end and there is no time for fooling around.

a) Love others like Christ does and your love will cover a multitude of sins.

b) And putting it all together in one concept! Live like this and you will have all the evidence you need to be convicted as a Christian!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. Utilizing the sermon notes and sermon video, craft an extensive essay to prove this one point.

A. Romans 12:9-21 can be considered the Pocket Handbook for the Christian Lifestyle.

B. Your essay should be between 2000 and 5000 words!