

THE THEOLOGY OF THE LOVE COMMANDMENT
LEONARD EVANS

RECOMMENDED BIBLES:

New American Standard
Jerusalem Bible
Revised Version
Phillips Translation
King James Version

KEY TEXT FOR COURSE: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-5.

LECTURE I: Background Search for "Reality": Introduction

December 12, 1977

Key Verse: "Then they cried out to the Lord in their troubles; He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them. And delivered them from their destructions." Ps. 107:19-20

Assigned Readings for Lecture II: (Sept. 19, 1977)

IJohn 1:1,3,5,7; 4:7-5:2. (Read and study all of IJohn.)
IPeter 1:22 (key passage) 3:8-12; 4:8
IThessalonians 3:12-13; 4:9-10; 1:3; 2:8,11,10-20; 5:5-15
IIThessalonians 3:5
ITimothy 1:5-6; 6:11,17-19
John 15:8-10,17
John 14:15-27 (compare with I John 4:12)
Colossians 3:1-25; 1:4,8; 2:2; 4:1
Philippians 1:11

LECTURE II: Discovery: The Love Theology - Hints of Adventure
(The Emerging Theology and Ontology of Faith)

December 19, 1977

Key Verse: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love." Gal. 5:6

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?' 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 abode with him.'" John 14:21-23

"No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us." IJohn 4:12

Assigned Readings for Lecture III (Sept. 26, 1977)

Romans 1:18-19 1:29-31 (compare with Eph. 2:1-2 and 5:14)
(what sin is)

Romans 13:8-14 12:9-10, 13-15, 16-21 14:1-23
15:1-7 5:3-5

Philippians 1:9-11

Ephesians 4:1-3, 15-19, 20-32 5:1-2, 8-9, 10-33 6:1-18

Compare Colossians 3:9-15 with Romans 13:8-14 and
Ephesians 6:10-20 and I Thessalonians 5:8-11

Compare with Isaiah 1:10-20

Galatians 5:1, 6, 13-25

- Note:**
1. Ontological Realism - The presence of God and awareness increased - experimental nature of obedience.
 2. Ontological Realism - The reality of God's real presence in "The Other".

LECTURE III: The Key: Spirit-Controlled, Love-Filled Human Relationships

January 16, 1978

Key Verse: "You shall not hate your fellow-countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord." Lev. 19:17-18

Assigned Readings for Lecture IV (Oct. 3, 1977)

Isaiah 1:10-20

Isaiah 5:1-30

Isaiah 58:1-14

Isaiah 59:1-21 (contrast with Isaiah 58)

Job 29:1-20 (compare with Job 1:1, 8)

LECTURE IV: Old Testament Roots (1) The Lord Has Shown You What He Desires

January 23, 1977

Key Verse: "With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:6-8

Assigned Readings for Lecture V (Oct. 10, 1977)

Deuteronomy (whole book)

4:2, 5-8

5:16-21

7:9-11, 12-15

8:1-3

10:12-20

11:8, 22, 26

14:28-29

15:7-11

27:11-26

Amos 1:1-15 2:1-16 3:10, 15 4:1-10 5:4-7, 10-24

Leviticus 19:9-18 (compare with Psalm 15)
Jeremiah 31:31-34 22:3-5,13-17
Ezekiel 34 36:25-38 (compare with 18:19-32 & 33:10-32)
Zechariah 7:8-14 (compare with Psalm 82)
Psalms 111 and 112 36:1-10 53:1-3

LECTURE V: Old Testament Roots (2): Christianity is the Art
of Loving, Just and True Relationships

January 29 1978

Key Verse: "Do not let kindness and truth leave you;
Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet
of your heart." Prov. 3:3

Assigned Reading for Lecture VI: (What is Wisdom?) (Oct. 17, 1977)

Read Proverbs through noting what wisdom is,
relationships indicated, who "fool" is,
how contrasted with "wise" man. Note
characteristics of each, long-range
consequences of their behavior, speech, etc.

Read James through noting especially 1:5-7
3:13-18 4:1-12 5:1-6 2:1-7,8-13
2:14-17 3:6-12

Read Matthew 5-7. Note especially 7:12-14,24-27

Read I Corinthians 1 10:3-23

Note especially Proverbs 1:7 (connect to 1:8-33);
2:1-22 3:3-4,5-35 4:1-27 6:16-19

LECTURE VI: What is Wisdom?

February 6, 1978

Key Verse: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;
Pride and arrognace and the evil way, and the perverted
mouth I hate." Prov. 8:13

"As it is written, There is none righteous, not even one.
There is none who understands. There is none who seeks for
God; All have turned aside, together they have become
useless. There is none who does good. There is not even one.
Their throat is an open grave;with their tongues they keep
deceiving. The poison of asps is under their lips; whose
mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are
swift to shed bleed. Destruction and misery are in
their paths, and the path of peace have they not known.
There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. 3:10-18

Assigned Readings for Lecture VII: What is the Kingdom of God?
(Oct. 24, 1977)

A. The Nature of the Kindgom

Romans 14:17-18

Luke 9:46-49 7:36-50

Matthew 5-7 (sermon on the Mount)

Matthew 18:1-35

John 3:1-21

B. The Proclomation of the Gospel of the Kingdom
(Good News)

Matthew 3:1-12

Mark 1:3-8

Luke 3:2-18
 John 1:6-8,19-28
 Matthew 4:1-25
 Mark 1:10-45 6:2 10:1
 Luke 4:14-44
 John 3:1-21
 Acts 1:3,8

C. The Promise of the Kingdom

Joel 2:28-29
 Ezekiel 36:25-29
 Jeremiah 31:31-34
 Isaiah 11:1-10
 Acts 2:1-39

D. The Relation of Old and New Covenant: The Way
 The Kingdom Works

Romans 5:5 8:1-28 13:8-10 14:17-18
 Galatians 5:1,6,13-26 6:7-10
 James 2:8-26
 I John 3:1-24 4:7-13,16-21
 Ephesians 5:1-6:9
 Hebrews 8:1-13 10:14-17
 IICorinthians 1:19-22 3:1-18

LECTURE VII: What is the Kingdom of God?

February 13, 1978

Key Verse: "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; 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? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent the 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 eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Mat.25:31-46
 "And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest. But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, 'Whosoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great.' And John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.'" Luke 9:46-49

Assigned Reading for Lecture VIII (Oct. 31, 1977)

Psalm 8:4-8
 Hebrews 2:1-3:1 2:5-18
 Luke 3:37-38
 James 3:8-18
 Genesis 1:26-31
 Psalm 82 (compare with John 10:27-42)
 IJohn 3:1-2

Illustration: Sr. Theresa Distressed Christ!

LECTURE VIII: What is Man?

February 20, 1978

Key Verse: "What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?"
 Prov. 8:4

Assigned Readings for Lecture IX: (Nov. 7, 1977)

A. Nature of God's Love
 John 3:16-7
 Romans 5:1-21
 IJohn 4:7-12
 B. The Cross as Love
 IPeter 1:22-2:3
 2:11-4:1,8-10
 Isaiah 52:13-53:12
 C. Jesus' Commandments
 John 13:34-35,14-15
 John 14:15-31
 John 15:1-16
 Matthew 10:29-42 16:25-27
 Luke 9:22-27
 Mark 8:3 9:1
 IJohn 3:16
 ICorinthians 12:31-14:1
 Hebrews 10:24 13:1
 Matthew 9:13 25:1-13,31-46
 ITimothy 1:5-6 5:9-10
 Jeremiah 7:1-34

LECTURE IX: The Cross: Love Focused and Aflame

February 27, 1978

Key Verse: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." ICor. 2:2
"But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Gal. 6:14-15

Assigned Readings for Lecture X: (Nov. 14, 1977)

Love as Unity: Sin's Separations Overcome

John 17:1-26

Ephesians (whole book)

Romans 13:8-15:7

Philippians 2:1-16

Psalms 133:1-3

Colossians 3:9-25

ICorinthians 1:10-18 3:1-23 6:1-11,19

Colossians 2:2

LECTURE X: Love as Unity: Sin's Separations Countered

March 6, 1978

Key Verse: "That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself." Col. 2:2
"But now is Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13

Assigned Readings for Lecture XI:

Ephesians 3:14-21

John 17:1-26

Isaiah 1:1-9

Hosea 11:1-12

James 1:17

Hebrews 12:9 (12:1-29) 1:5

Matthew 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9-15, 18, 33

7:2, 5 5:43-48 5:16

Luke 6:35-38 11:2-4 12:30-32

John 4:21-24

Romans 1:18-31

Matthew 18:10, 14, 35, etc.
Galatians 1:4 3:14, 33 4:5-7, 28-29
(compare with Acts 1:4)
Ephesians 1:2-4:17 2:18-22 4:3-6, 30-32
II Corinthians 1:3 6:18
John 15:26-27
Luke 24:49
John 20:17
Psalm 103:13

LECTURE XI: The Father Love of God: God is Love

March 13, 1978

Key Verse: "Jesus said to her, 'Stop clinging to Me; for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, "I ascend to My Father and Your Father, and My God and your God.".' John 20:17

Assigned readings for Lecture XII:
Restudy all of the Love List

LECTURE XII: Recapitulation: Areas of application:

- (1) The home and family - especially marriage
- (2) The church as a corporate body and witness
- (3) The Christian as light in the world (social and business)

NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE. I Corinthians 13:13

Scriptures to ponder: Ephesians 5:18-33 Colossians 3:1-25
Philippians 2:1-13; I Corinthians 13; Romans 14:1-15:7; Matthew 25:1-13; I John 1-5; I Thessalonians 3:12-13.

LOVE LIST

John 13:34-35 A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER: As I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.

I. NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES

1. I John 1:3, 5, 7; 4:7-5:2 (All of I John emphasises the person-to-person love which results from the love of God experienced in our hearts)
2. I PETER 1:22 (key passage) - note "unto" implying direction toward; I Peter 2:18-4:1 (love for the surly, the enemy); I Peter 4:8.
3. I Thessalonians 3:12-13 (note what "holiness" is from this in King James); I Thessalonians 4:9-10
4. John 15:8-13 (especially notice verses 10-12); John 15:17 (secret of MUCH FRUIT); John 14:21-23 (if and when we love - notice who, rather Who, indwells)
 - a) Compare I John 4:12 with this passage
 - b) Also from Old Testament sheet Isaiah 58
5. Colossians 3:1-23 (Note: you set your affections on things above from verses 9 to end - by demonstrating His love to the brethren)
6. Colossians 1:4 (compare with I John 3:23) also cf. with I Thessalonians 1:3
7. Colossians 2:2 (compare with Philippians 2:1-15)
8. Philippians 1:9-11
9. Romans 13:8-14 (compare with Galatians 5:1-14)
10. Galatians 5:14 - 6:3
11. Matthew 9:13 and 12:7, "sacrifice" - NOT DESIRED! "MERCY" - DESIRED!
12. Ephesians 4:1-3; 4:15-16 (study 4:17-19 - THE HARDENING PROCESS: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS (better word in Greek than blindness) OF THEIR HEART".
13. Romans 1:18-19; especially 1:29-31 (notice hardness of heart is final result of sin's process - compare with softening of I John 4:7ff and Colossians 3:12ff)
14. Ephesians 5:2 (actually 5:1-2); 5:25, 28, 33
15. II Peter 1:3-15 (tremendous pedagogy here)
16. I John 3:10-23 - 4:7-5:2
17. James 1:19-25; 2:1-13; 2:13 (tremendous verse) compare with Matthew 5:7
18. James 3:10-18; 4:11
19. Hebrews 10:24; 13:1
20. Titus 1:15-16; 2:7, 8-14 - ZEALOUS UNTO GOOD WORKS; 3:14
21. I Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the CHARGE (K.J. commandment) is LOVE (love which issues out of a pure heart, which issues out of a good conscience, and from a true faith).
22. I Timothy 5:9-10; 6:3 (note - "wholesome words")
23. 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 (grace of giving and sharing - in love)
24. I Corinthians 13:1 - 14:1 PURSUE LOVE - MAKE LOVE YOUR AIM
25. I Corinthians 7:19 (cf. Galatians 5:6)
26. Romans 14:1 - 15:7 (note Romans 15:7)
27. Romans 12:9, 10, 16, 21; Romans 14:17-19
28. Acts 20:36-38
29. I Thessalonians 5:8; I Thessalonians 2:19-20
30. Matthew 5 - 7 (Sermon on the Mount - note how much is "person-to-person")
31. Luke 6:27-49 (tremendous parallel to Matthew)
32. Matthew 25:1-13 (foolish virgins ran out of "oil" - deeds of love to others - could not make them up in a hurry - cf. Luke 12:13-48)
33. Matthew 25:31-46 (THE LAST ASSIZE - speaks for itself - it is still person-to-person)
34. Luke 11:37-44 (note especially 11:41-42)
35. Luke 12:33 (cf. Matthew 6:20, 33; 19:21)

I. NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES (cont'd)

36. Matthew 22:34-40 (cf. Matthew 7:12-29)
37. Matthew 15:1-20
38. Matthew 18:1-35 (tremendous passage - especially vv. 23-35 - compare with James 2:12-13)

There are many more emphases in the New Testament which come under the "umbrella" of love's behaviour such as purity of speech and conduct, etc. but enough are given to show it as a consistent emphasis.

II. OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

1. Isaiah 58 (note that God does not desire "sacrifice" so much as "mercy"; vv. 5-7 are His desire for our behaviour and vv. 8-10 show benefits and influence resulting)
2. Isaiah 59:1-15 - the negative of Isaiah 58
3. Micah 6:6-8 (key verses quoted by Jesus: Matthew 23:23)
4. Job 29 (cf. God's estimate of Job in Job 1:1 and 1:8); Job 24 and 31
5. Psalm 15 (who shall make it to be with God - THE PURE IN HEART)
6. Jeremiah 7:1-34 (tremendous passage)
7. Zechariah 7:8-14
8. Isaiah 5:1-25
9. Zechariah 8:16 (cf. James 1:27)
10. Isaiah 1:10-20 (classic passage)
11. Amos 4:1-3 (compare Ezekiel 17:49-50)
12. Proverbs 3:3
13. Proverbs 1:7 and 8:13 - key passages 6:17ff
14. Proverbs 3:27-28 (cf. Psalm 37 - the righteous man; Psalm 111 - the righteousness of God and Psalm 112 - the righteous deeds of the righteous man)
15. THE PROVERBS ARE A TREASURE TROVE OF THESE TRUTHS - concerning right conduct between man and man and sincere speech between man and man. There are too many practical applications in Proverbs to single them out: just one - Proverbs 22:9 "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor".
16. Psalm 41:1-3
17. Deuteronomy - THE WHOLE BOOK IS WORTHY OF STUDY AS FOUNDATIONAL FOR ALL THE REST: for example, read Deuteronomy 10:12-22
18. Jeremiah 31:31-34 (compare with Ezekiel 36:25-38)
19. Compare Ezekiel 18:19-32 with Ezekiel 33:10-32 and all of Ezekiel 34.

It appears to me from my study of the Word that God intended man to love one another, but SIN entered and had to be dealt with, sin that hardens affection and destroys relationships; this Jesus did at Calvary, destroying its power and making available a new power (Romans 8:1-4 and Matthew 5:17-20) of LOVE which is its (sin's) opposite and which can and does fulfil the intention of God. THIS LOVE IS POURED INTO OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (Romans 5:5 and Ephesians 5:18ff) and fulfils the law. Where this LOVE IS IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT sin's power is broken, but more than this - GOD'S PRESENCE IS REAL (John 14:21-23 and I John 4:12). We are invited to sow to the Spirit (Galatians 6:7-10) and reap a tremendous harvest (I Corinthians 15:58, John 15:16, and, as Jesus said, be not weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not). And so, dear brethren, this comes with our prayer that this shall be a blessing to you.