

“Children Of Extravagance”



By Mrs. Sojourner

Recently I read a devotion by Kenneth Copland titled “Expect A Harvest.” The scripture reference he had with this very good devotion is 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. I read this in the NIV first, and was then going to read it in the Amplified but I felt led to read the Message translation—one with which I am not familiar. Let us look at some points that the Apostle Paul makes in 2 Corinthians 9 (MSG):

6-7 Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.

Not only does our Heavenly Father expect his children to give lavishly, but he expects us to do so by definite decision so manipulation is not involved in the process. You see, when we obediently give extravagantly and with a definite decision, we are showing that we, his chil-

dren, have his character because we are giving just as he does.

Notes:

[a]
[b]

8-11 God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it, He throws caution to the winds, giving to the needy in reckless abandon. His right-living, right-giving ways never run out, never wear out.

We must remember that our God created EVERYTHING—this takes both planning and extravagance. We who give generously make ourselves open not only for God to bless us extravagantly but also for him to use us in ways beyond our imaginations to bring about his glorious plans.

9-24

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...with The Sojourner

“Greatest Love Connection!” (Teaching Sketch)

John 15:12-17 (NIV)



Love, what a word! Today in our society love has come to have so many meanings it can be difficult to know just what the word actually does mean. Often when a word meets this fate we must resort to the context in which it is used to “fine tune” the meaning to our personal understanding. This method of defining a word can even go astray if we put our own hopes, desires, and aspirations into the meaning that were not intended by the person who said the word love. Someone may say, “I love you.” but that can be misinterpreted when the hearer puts into the statement a meaning not intended.

When I was studying in the university I learned the more important a word was to a people the more words, more specific words, a language had in it for a particular topic to prevent misunderstanding and to protect both the speaker and the hearer. I was told, for example, Eskimos had over 30 words for snow

so as to be very specific as to what kind of snow was coming. An accurate meaning for the word snow to an Eskimo could mean life or death. The word snow was, therefore, an important word.

Notes:

[1]

Love Today

The word love, can be very easily misunderstood. Actually a person could determine that in the English language the word *love* was not very important since the one word covers so many different emotions and even opinions! “I love that color,” “I just love that jacket,” “I loved the movie,” or “I just love them,” for example.

It is a little challenging to grasp what the word *love* means exactly when it is used for so many different expressions.

Love, Grace, And God

Given these uses of the word love it is easy to see how hearing someone say, “God is love,” or “God loves you,”

9-24

Please note: This is a teaching sketch only and not the complete teaching.

Scripture: John 15:12-17 (NIV)

(NIV is employed here to allow English speakers around the world equal understanding of the words used)

¹²My command^[a] is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends^[b] if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Notes:

[a]
Greek—
Entole—
injunction, i.e.
an authoritativ
e *pre-*
scription
:- com-
mandmen
t, precept

[b]
Greek—
philos—
friend;
active
fond, i.e.
friendly
(noun an
associate,
neighbor



Just so you'll know:

Our service is informal. We look to the Holy Spirit of God to guide us corporately and individually.

Our service usually follows this general pattern:

- **Informal sharing** of what we have seen the Lord do in, through, and around us since we last met.
 - Testimonies are often a part of the conversation.
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Praise & Worship** (*Offerings are placed in the basket at this time*)
- **Words of Prophecy or Knowledge** if they have been given during "Praise & Worship" (other times as the Spirit moves).
- **The Pastoral Message**
- **Prayer Requests**
 - Ministry to those present & intercession.
- **The Blessing**

"Greatest Love Connection!" (Teaching Sketch)

John 15:12-17 (NIV)



might not carry great meaning to the hearer.

The Greatest Love

The greatest love connection is that of God to mankind via Jesus the Christ! Our scripture brings this out so clearly. When the Apostle John recorded the words of Jesus in Chapter 15 of his Gospel, Jesus made it very clear the importance of the word love when it comes to God and God's Kingdom!

The command Jesus spoke of in John 15:12 was the command to love. Love as used by God is the very essence of God.

When Jesus spoke in the next verse (:13) he said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." When Jesus gave up his life on the cross he was proving the meaning of the word love and what it means to God!

Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses so we would not have to live our lives striving for a target we could never hit! Godly behavior comes from following Jesus' commandment in John 15:12! Any godly behavior a believer en-

gages in is not to pay a price for their 'missing the mark' or 'falling short,' but is a thank you card, a love offering, to God for the gift of grace given not just the day they accepted Christ but for all the breaths granted them until they pass into eternity with Christ!

Not understanding grace is to not understand the new creature a believer becomes at the moment Christ is accepted. Not understanding the place of grace and the empowerment via the Holy Spirit to share the message of grace, by love, conferred on every believer is indeed sad.

This I know, it is not possible to give away what one does not possess. Perhaps some who are 'Christians' by philosophy, which is salvation by works (not God's plan), rely on behavior and judgment rather than being Christian by relationship which is the salvation given by God (is God's plan). 'Christians' by philosophy have never understood grace and thus are unable to give/show to others the grace (undeserved favor) God, through Christ's love, gives so freely to those who accept him and his great love gift!