

The Borders of Love

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Many people often entertain thoughts that send their emotions spinning out of control. Then they tend to fall into reactions that are based upon feelings and circumstances.

People become reactionary in situations instead of being responsive to the Holy Spirit when they have never established the borders of love in their lives. Borders are checkpoints. They keep the right things inside and the wrong things outside. What empowers these borders in our lives is God's great love.

In this booklet, we will examine the ways in which love can keep us and protect us, providing perfect peace and joy no matter what may come our way.

Chapter One

LOVE'S ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Is there any wound that love has not suffered? The Lord Jesus Christ suffered wounds in His side, His hands, and His feet. Think of the abuse that He endured. What He suffered on the Cross was the ultimate sacrifice of love. Love is more than able to endure the ultimate experience of suffering.

Many people cannot endure the ultimate form of suffering because the Holy Spirit has not yet filled them with His love. When the Holy Spirit progressively and continuously sheds God's love abroad in our hearts, then we will have the capacity to suffer the sacrifice of ultimate love for others.

So often, Christians react to others without revealing even a hint of the ultimate love that suffers long for all people. This is so serious because love is the most conclusive evidence that reveals our true salvation and eternal security

(John 13:35; 1 John 3:14). Unless we walk in love, we are sure to get way off within a short period of time (Ephesians 5:2). We know we have passed from death unto life if we love one another. The ultimate suffering of love is represented in sacrifice. As Christ laid down His life for us, so we should lay down our lives for one another (1 John 3:16).

Love Lays Down Its Life

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:14-16).

This is the issue that so many Christians do not want to face as it relates to Scripture: If we operate in anything less than God’s love, then we are operating in a form of hate. Anything less than sacrificial love is hate, in one form or another.

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

“O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent

“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

“Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

“They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying,

“He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

“But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.

“I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.

“Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

“Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

“They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

“I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture”
(Psalm 22:1-18).

Psalm 22 expresses that the ultimate meaning of love is to lay down our lives for those who do not deserve it. Jesus Christ initiated love when there was no response. The lack of our response did not decrease the manifestation of love that the Lord revealed at Calvary.

Demonstrating Love's True Character

Jesus Christ came into a world where everyone had turned to their own ways. Jesus did not come into a world that wanted His love. He

came into a world where no one sought after God. Still, while we were yet sinners, He came to earth and died on the Cross to demonstrate the nature of His character, the essence of His attributes, and the characteristics of the meaning of His love.

Marriage should never be based upon human attraction. I have heard husbands say of their wives, "She is my best friend." Does this mean that if she turned against him he would love her just as much? Would he remain her friend? (See Proverbs 17:17.)

If my wife turns against me and I stop being a true, faithful, and loving friend to her, then I am not loving her. Instead, I am merely involved in a mutual friendship with its mutual respect and admiration that fulfills a mutual need.

Chapter Two

THE PATH TO JOY AND PEACE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

“Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

With love comes joy. Love cannot produce anything but joy. Joy is the strength of love. Nehemiah 8:10 declares that the joy of the Lord is our strength. The first fruit of the Spirit is love, the second mentioned is joy. God gives a joy that no man can take from a person who is living in the ultimate meaning of sacrificial love with a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.

Along with joy comes peace, the third fruit of the Holy Spirit. “He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat” (Psalm 147:14).

It is very easy for us to love when circumstances are peaceful. If circumstances remain peaceful, then peace remains. But what happens

when the circumstances are disturbed? The peace is often disturbed too.

When God says that He will give us peace within our borders, He is speaking of the fact that the borders for peace are in the eternal circle of sacrificial love.

With love as the border for peace, if I step outside of love, then I am not living in peace: My mind is not established; it is not stayed upon love (Isaiah 26:3). Therefore, I lose perfect peace. Perfect peace happens only when perfect love surrounds me within its borders.

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2).

The essence of God is love, and grace is the channel of love’s communication. Because perfect love casts out fear, we will have a peace that passes understanding when we abide within love’s borders.

Perfect Light, Perfect Love

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165).

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let

it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Could you look me in the eye and say that you have not been offended, mentally or emotionally, in the past two weeks? Now, God doesn't say that we can live perfect lives. But He does say that we can live in perfect love and peace.

Life is filled with all kinds of relationships. Many relationships among Christians never enter into the fellowship of life, light, and love. Because of this, it is very easy to let a relationship become hindered. It is easy to fall into resentment, reaction, vindictiveness, bitterness, and dislike. This very easily happens in conditional relationships.

Even a very good relationship can degenerate if it is not centered around God's love. A believer could become involved in a relationship that has brought him peace, and that relationship leads to marriage. Six months later, however, he begins to notice signs of manipulation. He becomes the object of subconscious mocking, because of his appearance or something else, and peace disappears. What happened? Even though the relationship was centered on Bible knowledge, it was never centered on the Person of love—the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the re-

lationship cannot enter into the ultimate of love's meaning—the sacrifice of a Person. When problems come up in our relationships, we can overcome them by putting Christ's love into action.

Chapter Three

LOVE'S WALL OF FIRE

“While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

“As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

“And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

“And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly

“And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

“And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were

with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

“And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

“And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

“And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat” (Mark 5:35-43).

Jesus was ready to heal, in Mark 5. He didn't even hear the negative comments of those around Him.

“Don't trouble the Master.”

“The girl is dead.”

These were the statements made to a desperate father on the verge of losing his daughter to death.

Jesus didn't listen to those negative statements. He just went into the house, spoke the Word, and the twelve-year-old girl was raised up instantly. That was love in action.

Love never hears negative statements, so it doesn't receive negative energy. Negative energy doesn't enter our souls because of the purifying

wall of fire that surrounds Christians (Zechariah 2:5). Negative energy cannot penetrate that fire. The moment negative energy comes near, the fire—the holy spirit of burning, according to Isaiah 4:4—destroys it.

Negative statements, regardless who is making them, cannot get through. Reactions cannot get through. The negative ways people treat me can't get through this fire when I am established in self-sacrificing love.

Words That Bring Peace

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Peace comes from His words. Victory comes through His words. Nothing comes from natural ability. Nothing comes from attraction and human compatibility. Everything comes through the Cross, and it is there that all things are established.

“Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD 's servant?” (Isaiah 42:19).

This verse is speaking of Jesus, of course. He

is the only Perfect One. He never gazed upon any negative thing that could invade His soul and attack perfect love. He was deaf to the Pharisees' accusations. The only reason He openly rebuked them in divine indignation was to publicly identify their wicked, evil, religious hearts.

Spirit and Life

“Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

“Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Psalm 143:8-10).

God's words are spirit and life. Unless they become spirit and life to *me*, then as a believer, I have no foundation to stand upon when trouble comes.

When was the last time you had a negative mental attitude? Did you confess it as sin immediately? If it is allowed to continue, it may become an infection of evil.

The words Jesus has spoken to us, He has spoken that we might have peace (John 16:33).

Circumstances, family or marital problems, and health issues do not have to hinder us, because we have peace in the borders of love. If we leave these borders of love, then we lose peace because we have made it conditional and circumstantial.

The greatest peace and joy we can have is found in the fullness of God. If God's love surrounds us, then we have joy that becomes our strength. We are established in perfect peace because of the words He has spoken.

After His resurrection, the first thing Jesus said to the disciples who were hiding in the upper room was "Peace" (see John 20:19). He said, "Peace," because at that moment they didn't have it. Their hearts were troubled.

Christ's words give us the peace that surpasses our understanding, for they are rooted in a love that passes all knowledge (Ephesians 3:19). As we abide inside the borders of love, we can rest in God, who rests in His love and has joy over His children with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

CONCLUSION

The God of peace raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This same peace that Jesus had when he was raised from the dead now surrounds you in His love. Because that is true, you can handle anything that comes into your life.

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. Then, He was raised from the dead so we could be raised with Him. This is a great correlating truth at work in our spiritual journey toward manifesting His true nature of love.

A Christian filled with God's love always has joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. These are the eight characteristics of Christ's essence, which is love. Knowing this is the key to unlocking the door to life's adventures. It is the key to a faith that enables one to live through grace upon grace and faith upon faith.

As we meditate upon this message, let that knowledge become life, let understanding be-

come experience, and let exposure become reality through God's life.