

LESSON

11 Relating to God and to Others

We have learned that our main responsibility as Christian believers is to love God. We keep His commandments because we love Him. So, our relationship with God is one of love.

First Corinthians 13 gives a beautiful description of love. Verses 4–8 tell us that love is patient and kind, not jealous, conceited, proud, ill mannered, selfish, or irritable. It does not keep a record of wrongs nor is it happy with evil, but with truth. Love never gives up—it is eternal. This may sound like an ideal picture of love. But it is this kind of love that every Christian believer should have for God and others. It is this unconditional love that God gives to us.

It is no accident that the chapters before and after 1 Corinthians 13 are about God's gifts to believers. The chapter on love is tied in with the chapters on gifts because love also is a gift. When we love others we want to give them what will please them most.

The Plan

- A. God's Gifts to Us
- B. Our Gifts to God
- C. Relating With Others

The Goals

- 1. Identify several gifts from God for His children.
- 2. List gifts that believers can give to God.
- 3. Indicate whom a believer must honor and obey.

A. GOD'S GIFTS TO US

Goal 1. Identify several gifts from God for His children.

The first gift that God gives us when we choose to believe on Him is the gift of salvation. Paul wrote,

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.
(Ephesians 2:8–9)

If we are believers, God is our heavenly Father and we are His children. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus refers to the Father: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” It is wonderful that we can talk to God as we would to a loving father. Jesus taught us to talk to God this way: ““Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name”” (Matthew 6:9).

Although God is the Creator, He is the Father of only those who have been born into His family. To be part of the family of God we must accept His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. Then new life begins.

Paul writes, “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). God watches over us as His children. He watches day and night. “He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber” (Psalm 121:3). “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry” (Psalm 34:15). There are many verses like this in Psalms that tell us of God’s care for us.

When our Father tells us in His Word that He will do certain things for us, we call those verses *promises*. Promises indicate what God will do for us. We can receive blessing and the fulfillment of what God has promised, as we believe in His Word.

“Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.”
(John 14:12–13)

Christians can also receive blessings from God by helping others. Psalm 41:1 states, “Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.”

We can receive many gifts from God if we will believe and ask Him for them. This act of believing is called *faith*. Our faith pleases God and brings not only salvation and other gifts, but also healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

That we receive healing through faith is found in James 5:15: “The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is also received through faith. Paul writes,

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. (Galatians 3:14)

The greatest gift, however, is found in Romans 6:23, “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” James also confirms that “every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” (James 1:17).

Application

1 Read Psalm 91. What words could be used to describe these promises that are a gift from God?

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2 Read the references on the left. Write beside each the number of the promise on the right that is mentioned in the verse.

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ... a Romans 5:17 | 1) Wisdom, knowledge, and happiness |
| ... b Ecclesiastes 2:26 | 2) Workings |
| ... c Ezekiel 11:19 | 3) Abundant grace |
| ... d Matthew 11:28 | 4) New heart and new mind |
| ... e 1 Corinthians 12:6 | 5) Rest |

3 Write at least three gifts that you have received from God since receiving Jesus as your Savior.

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B. OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Goal 2. List gifts that believers can give to God.

Does it seem strange to give something to God who has everything? In His Word God himself tells us what we can give Him.

We can give God our worship. Psalm 95:6 says, “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.” Worship can be given by praying, by thanking God for His blessings, by praising Him and giving to His work. Colossians 3:16 tells us to sing to God with gratitude.

We also worship when we give ourselves to God without holding back.

I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1–2)

Giving our money is another way to worship. And when we give, we also receive. God promised in Malachi 3:10:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

A tithe is ten percent of your income.

As Christians, everything we do can be as to the Lord. Jesus gives an account of people who received rewards for giving food and drink to Him and for visiting Him in prison. He said, “‘Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me’” (Matthew 25:45). Thus, our giving must become a way of life.

Continuous worship does not mean being on our knees continually in prayer. If we will live each day in a manner pleasing to the Lord—He will count it as unending worship. We will not find it difficult to always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20), for He is worthy.

Application

- 4** Which could be considered as worship or gifts to God?
- a)** Singing choruses while doing chores
 - b)** Not showing anger when your boss is unreasonable
 - c)** Going to church on Sunday
 - d)** Giving thanks to God before you eat
 - e)** Silently thinking of God's goodness
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C. RELATING WITH OTHERS

Goal 3. Indicate whom a believer must honor and obey.

Those Over Us

Everyone at one time or another has had someone in authority over him or her. Children have parents over them, and parents have religious and political leaders over them. Even those leaders have others who tell them what to do. What does the Bible say about our relationship to those who are over us?

Parents should be loved, honored, and obeyed. You will remember this as one of the commandments that we studied. Ephesians 6:1–2 also tells us, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

Rulers such as policemen, judges, and governors should also be obeyed. Paul writes, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” (Romans 13:1).

As believers we have leaders like our pastors, the church board, and Sunday School teachers. They should be respected and obeyed in matters pertaining to their responsibilities.

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Only the authority of God is higher than that of the leaders over us. The only time that our obedience is not required is when our earthly leaders ask us to do something that is expressly against God's commandments or will. This happened to Peter and the other apostles when they were forbidden to preach. Acts 5:29 records, "Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men!'"

Application

5 Read the verses below. Write in front of each verse the number of the description it matches.

... **a** 1 Timothy 5:17

... **b** Colossians 3:20

... **c** 1 Peter 2:13

... **d** Proverbs 6:20

... **e** Matthew 22:17–21

1) Honoring parents

2) Honoring civil authorities

3) Honoring church leaders

6 Read the list below, then put an X by any one or more that you have trouble respecting or honoring.

... Father

... Mother

... Pastor

... Board of Church

... Police

If you have put an X beside any of the above, ask the Lord to help you understand why you have problems honoring them and to help you respect and obey them from now on.

Those Around Us

One day a friend said to me, “If unbelievers treat me badly I can still love them. But, I will not tolerate bad treatment from another Christian. They know better!”

What would have happened to Peter and the other apostles if Jesus had felt that way? They knew better, yet they all failed Him when he was arrested and taken to His trial. Even so, when He arose, He appeared to them and assured them of His love.

We have failed the Lord many times, but He continues to love us. The Lord asks us to love other Christians as He loves us. ““As I have loved you, so you must love one another”” (John 13:34).

Our friends and neighbors should be treated as we would like to be treated. Jesus said, ““Do to others as you would have them do to you”” (Luke 6:31). Paul also encouraged believers: ““Love your neighbor as yourself”” (Romans 13:9).

Our relationship to the unsaved is also one of love. We should show them by the way we act that Christ lives in us.

Richard Wurmbrant, a Christian pastor who was jailed for his faith, tells the story of a fellow-prisoner who was also a pastor. He was known for his outstanding Christ-like character.

Later, a young communist was jailed and put in the same cells as these pastors. The pastors witnessed to him and told him to accept Jesus as his Savior. But the young man refused.

One day the young man was arguing. “How can I accept someone as my Savior,” he said, “if I’ve never met Him and don’t know what He’s like?”

“I’ll tell you who Jesus is like,” replied the pastor, “He’s like me!”

Without hesitation, the man answered, “If He’s like you, I’ll accept Him as my Savior right now!”

What a marvelous testimony that pastor had. Unfortunately, there are very few believers who would dare to say, “Jesus is like me!” But, this is what the Lord wants—that we be so much like Him, that people can see Him in us! Jesus taught, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Application

7 Which of the following situations are **RIGHT** for believers and which are **WRONG**? Write R before those that are right and W before those that are wrong.

- ... **a** A fellow Christian slanders your name. You are thinking about taking him to court.
- ... **b** Your neighbor says, “Don’t ever come back to talk to me about Christ again!” But the next day when he needs help, you go over and help him.
- ... **c** Your pastor preaches something you don’t like so you walk out of church to show your displeasure.
- ... **d** A Christian friend sins and instead of exposing him before the church, you go to him privately and help him repent and get right with God.

8 Read 1 John 4:7–21. According to these verses which of the following statements are TRUE?

- a)** We love because God first loved us.
- b)** Whoever does not love does not know God.
- c)** There is fear in love because love might be rejected.
- d)** Loving God is enough; there is no need to love a brother if he treats you wrongly.



Those Against Us

What did Jesus do the night He was arrested and Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's slave? Though the slave was an enemy of Jesus, Jesus intercepted, "'No more of this!' And he touched the man's ear and healed him" (Luke 22:51).

We want to be like Jesus who loved His enemies and forgave them. Jesus said, "'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'" (Matthew 5:44). Again in Matthew 6:15, He said, "'If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.'"

Love is the greatest Christian virtue. First Corinthians 13:13 tells us, "These three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Christians should love God first. He will in turn put His love in our hearts so we can love both friends and enemies. Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'" (Matthew 22:37).

John records Jesus' words: "'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another'" (John 13:34). Memorize this verse and repeat it often, remembering that a believer's most important responsibility to God and humans is to love.

Application

- 9** Which of the following statements are TRUE in your life?
- a)** The way you treat your family influences them to accept what you say about God.
 - b)** Your actions make your friends want the same power of God that has changed your life.
 - c)** You are praying every day that when people see you they will be able to see Jesus, too.
 - d)** You are praying for friends who are having a hard time loving others.
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Check Your Answers

- 1** Your answer. You might sum them up with words like: God's Protection or Safety in God.
- 2**
 - a** 3) Abundant provision
 - b** 1) Wisdom, knowledge, and happiness
 - c** 4) Undivided heart and new spirit
 - d** 5) Rest
 - e** 2) Workings
- 3** Your answer. You might have been healed, given a job, been delivered from fear or found new hope—His gifts are many.
- 4** All the statements tell of ways we can worship.
- 5**
 - a** 3) Honoring church leaders
 - b** 1) Honoring parents
 - c** 2) Honoring civil authorities
 - d** 1) Honoring parents
 - e** 2) Honoring civil authorities
- 8** **a)** and **b)** are true.
- 6** Your answer
- 9** Your answers. Examine your actions and ask God to give you strength to live up to His standards day by day.
- 7**
 - a** Wrong
 - b** Right
 - c** Wrong
 - d** Right