

Dear Partners & Friends,

Thank you for your prayers and gracious gifts in 2012. Your contributions to the cause of Christ have brought much fruit to the glory of God. It is so encouraging to this ministry to witness the impact the truth of the Gospel and sound Bible teaching are making in the lives of those incarcerated. God uses your gracious gifts to bring the lost to Christ, and build them up to maturity in Christ.

I have come to realize in my 11 years of doing prison ministry that these people's greatest need is the simple gospel message of faith alone in Christ alone for salvation along with everything that pertains to life, and godliness, and sound Bible teaching that will bring them to spiritual maturity. Their lives of crime, addiction, moral corruption, and immorality can gradually change if they will only believe and put themselves under the authority of what they are learning week after week.

They learn how much God loves them and the impact this love should have on their lives. They also learn that the spiritual life is not going to Church, reading your Bible, and praying. All this is good and part of the plan of God for our lives but it can become ritual if not backed with a changed heart of obedience.

True spirituality is a life of obedience to the known will of God whereby we are constantly filled with the Holy Spirit as a lifestyle. The pages of scripture must become shoe leather.

If I had time I could share with you so many stories of lives being changed through this ministry of grace and truth. Please keep this ministry in your prayers, and thanks for believing in what God is doing through this ministry. It is so powerful to watch what He alone is doing in the lives of men, and we play a small part in that work. God only needs our availability, and He gives us the ability.

Thanks again for your love and participation,

**Keithian L. Starling**



## OUR MISSION

Grace Prison Ministries Mission Statement in fulfilling the twofold mission of the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:19-20) is as follows:

1. **EVANGELISM** - This includes winning the unsaved that are incarcerated but not limited to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through:

- a) The presentation of the simple gospel message of faith alone in Christ alone for salvation to those incarcerated and abroad.
- b) We will make the gospel as clear as possible, relying on the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the decision to believe or reject to the individual.
- c) We will use no gimmicks to win people to Christ.

2. **EDIFICATION** - Bring to spiritual maturity those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation through teaching them the word of God so that they too can function as part of the body of Christ in further evangelism and edification. We do this in the following manner:

- a) We provide Bibles as God provides to those who don't have one.
- b) We teach sound doctrine in the prisons, in a local church setting, and through prison conferences.
- c) We provide resources like Biblical books, recorded and written lessons.
- d) We direct the believer to a local church upon release from prison.

In conjunction with these two primary missions, we also have the following objectives:

**EQUIPPING** - Start Bible Institutes in prisons providing resources for training, so the serious students of the Word of God can be trained for local church service and missionary work abroad especially in the prisons.

Assisting the needy as God provides and directs us - This may include but is not limited to:

- a) Provision of food
- b) Provision of clothing

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# Letters from the Inside

**Dear Keithian,**

I received the Grace Prison Ministries newsletter through one of the volunteers that comes to teach us Bible studies. I am presently incarcerated at the Wayne County Jail in Honesdale PA.

The women who come here are my strength and joy. They are all sisters and I look forward to the days when they come here. I appreciate the work that they and you all do so well. If it wasn't for volunteers such as you guys, the prison system would be at a total loss!

I am so grateful for them, and the impact they have on my spiritual life. My relationship with God has become stronger thanks to these women. I just wanted to write you and tell you I am so proud of a young man as yourself who is full of the word and to acknowledge the great work that the volunteer women have done through the prison ministry here. They are all dedicated, and are role models to us! I want them to know how great their work here is. Please keep up the good work, Keithian. God bless you and your family.

— *Wayne County Jail / Honesdale, PA*

**Dear Mr. Starling,**

I want to thank you for your Bible Studies. The way you teach really gives me motivation. I like the way you break down the scriptures. You explain it and give different examples illustrating what is being taught. I like the Bible studies you send me through the mail. When you speak in person, you don't just preach the word of God but use the dry erase board using pictures and diagrams to help us understand the truth.

I also like how you give definitions of words from the Bible from the original languages. Mr. Starling, I also noticed that every time you teach in public someone will ask you a question about their life problems. You always give them positive and Biblical answers. You give them scriptures, show them how to study, and how to apply it. Thank you for teaching and guiding us.

— *Metro Detention Center / Nashville, Tennessee*

**Dear Keithian,**

By the will of God and his grace alone, I would like to thank God for using you in saving my life, and helping me become a follower of Christ. I don't know if I could have done it without you and the church. Now I know what it feels like to know what true love is. Grace says "I love you" reaching down, and faith says "I believe you" looking up. I will never forget the day

of April 6, 2012, the day my life changed. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to me in the form of a man the day I met you. Before that day I had never read the Bible and when I tried to I never could understand it, but on April 6th the word became "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" Ps.119:105.

In this short walk with God I have witnessed miracles in this place. One of those miracles was me. In God's strength I was able to put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created us. I thank you and the brethren for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. You and your church have given me so much hope and helped me to build faith. I hold on strong to God's promise and remember your testimony of His grace to you. This reminds me that I too can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Thank you Keithian and Grace Prisons Ministries for all that you do.

— *Hills Detention Center / Nashville, Tennessee*

**Dear Keithian,**

I just wanted to write to tell you how much I appreciate what you do for me and everyone else. I received my first study today and it was a blessing. I learned a lot from it. It gave me a new outlook on the beginning and how sin came about. I can't wait to get the next Bible lesson. God is so wonderful and I want to build my relationship with Him as much as possible. He gives me a peace and understanding that I have never had before. He completed me. I am so glad to finally know Him and His love for me. It's what I've been missing my whole life. Well, I just wanted to write and say thank you for all your time.

God bless you.

— *Correctional Development Center / Nashville, Tennessee*

**Dear Grace Prison Ministries,**

I was first introduced to Grace Prisons Ministries at D.C.S.O. I've been receiving bible studies through the mail since then. I have been doing the studies in the mail for over a year and a half now. The Holy Spirit as my teacher has taught me so much through these studies. The lessons are clear and in depth so that you can follow along. Just recently Mr. Starling visited Tennessee Prison for Women and his testimony and teachings are a powerful blessing in my life. My life has been impacted for the better through this truth given by his ministry. My journey is now clearer, being exposed to whole truths that GPM has to offer. If I have questions, the grader always answers and responds. I've found answers that other ministries won't speak on or just won't touch on. So, I appreciate 100% of the bible truthfully. GPM has truly been a blessing to me and hopefully you will continue to be a blessing to my life.

God bless.

— *Tennessee Prison for Women / Nashville, TN*

**To whom it concerns:**

I attend the Grace Prison Ministries Monday service at the Correctional Development Center. I have been attending this Bible study since August 2011. I want all to know that I have a wonderful teacher. The Bible study on Monday has helped me and made a great impact on my life. It has helped me to get to know God and His purpose in sending His uniquely born son into the world to die for me!! I am now a born again Christian. I am very grateful for Grace Prison Ministries and pray that Keithian will continue to come here, and to other jails.

Thanks!

**Impact Statement from C.B.I. Student:**

Something that continues to have an impact on me is learning about the nature of God and His attributes. I really enjoyed the way our Bible Doctrine Survey studies brought out so many aspects of God’s character and nature. It’s impossible not to be in awe of His absolute perfection. One of my favorites is His faithfulness - because when He says that He will never leave me nor forsake me, He has the ability to back that up with His other attributes.

- He is TRUTH so I know He means what He says.
- He is OMNIPOTENT so I know that He has the power to remain faithful to me no matter what forces are working against me.
- He is SOVEREIGN so He has the authority to do whatever He wants.
- HE is IMMUTABLE so I know He will never change His mind and decide not to be faithful.
- HE is INFINITE so I know His promise will last forever.
- He is LOVE so He wants to remain faithful to me because He loves me so much.
- In His OMNISCIENCE He knew how undeserving I would be, but promised to be faithful anyway.
- He is OMNIPRESENT so it’s not hard for Him to be faithful since He is with me all the time anyway.

Wow! Why would I ever worry about anything?



**Grace Prison Ministries  
Weekly Prison Bible Studies:**

Monday	1:00pm - 2:00pm	Correctional Development Center
Tuesday	7:30pm - 9:30pm	Hills Detention Center
Wednesday	6:30pm - 8:30pm	Metro Detention Center
Friday	8:30am - 10:30am	Criminal Justice Center
Sunday	6:30pm - 8:30pm	Criminal Justice Center

**Prisons & Jails  
Grace Prison Ministries  
Served in 2012:**

- Wayne County Jail \_\_\_\_\_ Honesdale, PA
- Tennessee Prison for Women \_\_ Nashville, TN
- Hills Detention Center \_\_\_\_\_ Nashville, TN
- Metro Detention Center \_\_\_\_\_ Nashville, TN
- Correctional Corporation  
of America \_\_\_\_\_ Nashville, TN
- Criminal Justice Center \_\_\_\_\_ Nashville, TN
- Dougherty County Jail \_\_\_\_\_ Albany, GA
- Augusta SMP \_\_\_\_\_ Grovetown, GA
- Hays State Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Trion, GA
- Smith State Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Glennville, GA
- Valdosta State Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Valdosta, GA
- Bostick State Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Hardwick, GA
- Wilcox State Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Abbeville, GA
- T. Allred Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Iowa Park, TX
- Warren County Jail \_\_\_\_\_ Bowling Green, KY
- Mark H. Luttrell  
Correctional Center \_\_\_\_\_ Memphis, TN
- Robert L. Patten Probation  
Detention Ctr. \_\_\_\_\_ Lakeland, GA
- West Tennessee State  
Penitentiary \_\_\_\_\_ Henning, TN
- Turner Center Annex \_\_\_\_\_ Clifton, TN
- Robertson County Jail \_\_\_\_\_ Springfield, TN



# Truth for the Soul | Imitating God: Walking In Love

— Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

**(Eph. 5:1-2 NASB)**

The word therefore refers the believers at Ephesus back to what was previously written. In Chapter 4:1-3, the Apostle Paul is urging them to live in humility, gentleness, patience, forbearing with one another in love, preserving the peaceful unity of the Spirit among the family of God.

Paul then writes in Eph. 4:17—24 that they are to not imitate their old life but to put it away and put on their new life in Christ. They are a new creation and that new life is to be practiced. Paul then starts the next section with the conjunction “therefore” or “for this reason” (see Eph. 4:25-32.).

Paul, having established the believer’s position in Christ as a new creation or a new person (4:24), now points out that the believer’s practices should reflect their new life in Christ.

The practices that is to be laid aside which characterized the old life is lying, anger, stealing, and rotten speech that tears others down. These sins grieve the Holy Spirit and take the believer out of fellowship with God. These practices characterize the opposite of walking in love.

Lying is speaking that which is not genuine or real (4:25). It is speaking falsehood. It is a characteristic of the devil (John 8:44), and the work of the flesh.

The new person is to put off lying as one puts off old clothes, making it a habit to speak truth with their neighbor (other believers). Truth is to characterize the life of the new person.

The believers are to be angry (righteous anger) but not let that anger lead to sin (4:26).

Anger in itself is not sinful. Paul is not telling the believers at Ephesus that it is okay to sin. Anger is an emotional arousal caused by something that displeases us.

We see this type of anger in Deuteronomy 9:8 where Moses reminded the people of their sin of making the golden calf (Exodus 32). The people provoked God to anger through their sin of idolatry (worshipping something else instead of the true God).

The anger which is shown here is righteous indignation and is directed towards wrong doing. Our Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 3:5 displayed this type of anger when He saw the hardness of the hearts of the religious leaders of His day. They criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath.

He also went into the temple and turned over tables because God’s house had become a place where people gathered to sell their merchandise (John 2:13-16).

This type of anger is not sin and doesn’t grieve the Holy Spirit.

It is not self-righteous anger here either. Righteous anger is opposed to anything that is against righteousness and the teaching of the Word of God.

This anger is against wrong doing, false teaching, legalism, unbelief, apostasy, and false religion. All these characteristics are enemies of Christ, and His word.

The true believer growing in Christ desires to live right and honor God. He sin at times but don’t desire to sin, and hates what God hates. He don’t sit around comparing him-self with others by his own standard which is flawed.

He compares himself by God’s standard. He knows he is not perfect when measured by God’s standard, but he have a new nature and a love for God that causes him to desire righteousness.

Some have said, I have a problem with anger. I will agree with them, and I’m sure my wife will agree as well. It is when their sinful behavior is exposed that they get defensive and say I have a problem with anger. If I don’t say anything about their kind of lifestyle that is contrary to the word of God then I’m a compassionate person.

We are never to be self-righteous and go around fault finding. But there is a time where the Bible permits showing a brother his fault. This action is for restoration not to prove to be better or more righteous.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with church discipline supports this action:

And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen [lack of humility] to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them [lack of humility], tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church [lack of humility], let him be to you as a Gentile and tax-gatherer. (Matt. 18:15-18)

When known sins occurs our Lord Jesus is telling us what to do in the church. If a brother sins against another, the two of them should discuss the matter in private. If the matter is settled there is no need to go further. But if the sinning (guilty one) refuses to listen, then two or three witnesses should be taken along for a clear witness. If the sinning brother still refuses to recognize his error, the situation should be told to the entire church or assembly.

The one who refuses to acknowledge his sin is then to be treated as an outsider. Why? The pastor and the leaders most maintain the purity of the church.

We are to be patient but there is a time where we must deal with the sinful conduct in our mist, and be ready to forgive, comfort, and restore to the fellowship the sinning brother who

acknowledge his error. (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

I will admit, I haven't always done it the Lord's way. I have at times told them their error in the company of others first.

I have allowed my irritation at the wrong doing, selfishness, partiality, rebellion, and unbelief I see so prevalent among Christians to cause me to sin.

This type of anger is prohibited. It is a sinful type of anger. Believers are not to allow righteousness indignation anger to cause them to get into sinful anger.

We are not to allow ourselves to be provoked to the point where we resent the person that has wronged us.

The believers are not to prolong their righteous anger. This leads to sin and allows the devil to get a hold of them. They are to control their anger and not allow it to control them.

If someone wrongs another believer it is okay to be angry at their sinful conduct but not allow that anger to consume you. Believers are to reconcile before the sun goes down and are not go to sleep with irritation anger. Eph. 4:26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

If the believer does allow their anger to control them for a prolonged period of time, irritation anger will eventually lead to "out-bursts of anger" (Eph. 4:31; Gal. 5:20) with its bitterness, malice, and abusive speech. This is the work of the flesh and grieves the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness is the solution to anger.

In v. 32 Paul gives a positive command for the believers to become kind to one another, and compassionate. Believers are to be gracious to one another as God has been gracious to them. Graciousness is the opposite of bitterness, anger, wrath, shouting, and abusive speech.

Graciousness builds up and doesn't use words that tear down. Paul gives the reason for believers to be gracious and forgiving. God was very gracious to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Now believers are to demonstrate that same graciousness.

Now, in Chapter 5:1-2 Paul began with the conjunction "therefore" which as stated earlier refers the believers back to what was just stated. Paul gives the believer **another positive command**.

### **What is the command?**

#### **"Be imitators of God, as beloved children"**

The word "**Be**" here is the present imperative of the Greek verb *ginomai* meaning "**to become**". The present tense indicates continuous habitual action in the present. The imperative mood is the mood of command.

The present tense indicates that the action commanded is an ongoing process. The believers are to develop continuously into imitators of God. They are to habitually do this as a way of life.

Whenever there is a command our volition is involved. We can choose to obey or disobey. If we obey we will be blessed (Luke 11:27-28; James 1:22; 25).

Believers imitating God is not the will of the Apostle Paul but the will of God. God has made them partakers of his divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4) and now expects for that nature to be displayed in practice.

The word translated "imitator" here is the Greek *mimetes* where we get our English word "mimic" from. Webster's Dictionary defines mimic as "to copy or resemble closely". In the Greek mind *mimetes* carries the same concept as a "copier".

The Apostle Paul used this word when encouraging the believers at Corinth to use him as their model (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Paul had set forth an example for them to follow. They were to copy him as their spiritual father.

Paul also used *mimetes* in writing to the Hebrews in 6:12. He encouraged them to imitate the faith and patience of those who inherited God's promises like Abraham (Hebrews 6:12-15).

The believers were not to get lazy in ministering to the saints but continue on. God sees their work, and will reward them in His time. They are to use Abraham's life of faith and patience as a model for them in testing.

So we see that the word carries the idea of using someone as your role model. Who are the believers to imitate? They are to "imitate God". Paul commands the believers at Ephesus to imitate God as beloved children.

They are to determine to copy Him as their father and do it habitually as a way of life. It should not be a one shot dedication but a life of dedication. He was gracious to them, now they are to be gracious to others.

### **What are believers to imitate?**

#### **"And walk in love"**

Believers are to imitate God's love demonstrated through Christ. The word translated "walk" here is the Greek verb *peripateo* meaning "to live"; "to conduct one's life".

It is in the present tense. This indicates that it should be a way of life or habit. *Peripateo* refers to the sphere in which one should live, so as to be characterized by that sphere. The believers are to live in the sphere of love as a way of life. Their lives should be characterized by God's love and graciousness.

The verb "love" is the Greek *agape* meaning "to esteem or to have regard for, and interest in another without limitation to very intimate relationship". *Agape* is unconditional, undeserved, and unmerited love in action.

### **This type of love seeks:**

- a. To give and not get.
- b. To sacrifice and not to be selfish.
- c. The highest good in the one loved.

*continued on page 8*



## Grace Prison Ministries At-A-Glance

Grace Prison Ministries Inc. is a Christian, grace-oriented, nonprofit organization incorporated in Tennessee which focuses on changing the lives of prisoners and their families through evangelism and sound Bible teaching.

GPM travels to jails, prisons, and youth detention centers throughout the United States; evangelizing individuals with the message of Jesus Christ at four to five institutions per month. This activity is important because the message of Jesus Christ brings hope, forgiveness, and change to those incarcerated. This way, those incarcerated can become law-abiding citizens and good role models in our society. Upon our visits we provide Bibles for those in need of Bibles. In conjunction with the above activities GPM has the following ministries which are designed to bring glory to Jesus Christ and edification to believers:

### Discipleship through Mail

The Discipleship through Mail outreach is designed to equip new believers in the basic fundamental doctrines for living the normal Christian life. Bible lessons and resources are mailed to individual students in various prisons, jails, and youth detention centers, providing them an opportunity to learn and grow at their own pace. These lessons are reviewed and then mailed back to the students with comments that will provide a greater understanding of Bible truths. There are nearly 500 students enlisted in this program nationwide. D.T.M. is also designed to help develop the serious students who have already completed the basics, by creating personalized studies and providing more biblical resources to help them continue their growth to maturity. Upon completion of the basics, students are rewarded with a study Bible, which is hard for some to get in prison.



Discipleship by mail

### Operation Impact Lives

Operation Impact Lives is a group of believers partnering to impact the lives of prisoners. O.I.L. is comprised of pastors, evangelists, and biblically sound seminaries. Periodically, conferences are held in prisons, jails and youth detention centers where pastors, evangelists and passionate believers join together to fulfill the great commission (presenting the Gospel and equipping the saints). We take the gospel, sound Bible teaching, and resources to them which gives prisoners hope, purpose, and a new way of thinking.

Once inmates respond positively to Bible truth, they need to be built up in the faith. We partner with seminaries willing to give free tuition to those serious students that are incarcerated. GPM, as God provides, will help with the textbooks for their studies. Upon the release of those incarcerated, it is the desire of GPM to offer a scholarship program for ex-inmates with seminaries willing to collaborate, so that they may be educated and prepared to work in ministry upon release for those who are called to do His work. We also accept theological books and Bible dictionaries that can be used by these students. The great commission is about teaching the faithful so they may be equipped to teach others.



Operation Impact Lives

(cont.)



## Grace Refuge Transition Facility

In an effort to assist recently released inmates, GPM offers temporary housing, food, clothing, and limited transportation. By God's grace, GPM has a 2400 square ft. house on 1 acre of land in Madison, TN. This facility is temporal housing for those recently released inmates that have been proved and are positive towards learning and applying the word of God to life. Most of those housed are individuals who have expressed interest in getting trained so they can find a job and become self-sustaining. They are allowed to stay three to six to twelve months. Those who want to get a job and become involved in the work of the ministry are allowed to stay longer.



Operation Impact Lives

## Charis Bible Institute

Grace Prison Ministries partnering with Bible Training Centre for Pastors formed Charis Bible Institute in June 2011 which seeks to extend non-formal theological training free of charge by forming Bible institutes in prisons for those growing to maturity in Christ and have expressed interest in getting training for local church ministry and missionary work aboard. The best pastor, evangelist, and teacher is one who came from that culture and properly trained. We are now extending our service to churches.



Charis Bible Institute

## Spreading the Word

GPM welcomes any invitation to come spread God's word and to share what God is doing through GPM. Keithian and the GPM team are willing to travel to any state to disseminate His message to those who are lost and without hope and those interested in learning about this ministry. Every day that is given to us is an opportunity to share His word and make an impact in the lives of the others. Preaching and teaching opportunities are not limited to youth detention centers, jails and prisons. Keithian has also taught at churches, conferences, youth camps, schools, retirement homes and hospitals. We need your continued support both in prayers and financial contributions.

Thank you to all who have shared with this ministry in the dissemination of the word of God. This is a grace ministry. We trust God to meet our needs as they arise. Please learn more about our ministry on our website [www.graceprisons.org](http://www.graceprisons.org).



Keithian at a Nashville Jail



Grace Prison Ministries

**Financial Policy:** Grace Prison Ministries is a Christian non-denominational, mission minded, and Bible teaching non-profit tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (3). All contributions to this grace ministry are tax deductible. G.P.M. offers its services free of charge. We trust God to meet the needs of this ministry. We do not solicit funds but operate entirely on voluntary contributions. When understanding the need to reach lost souls with the good news and sound Bible teaching motivate you to contribute, you have the privilege of giving and sharing in the dissemination of the Word of God. This is a grace ministry.



## Grace Prison Ministries, Inc.

P.O. Box 171052

Nashville, TN 37217

### Urgent! Prayer Requests

- ❖ Believers to be revived all over the world
- ❖ More open doors for prison and jail ministry
- ❖ Open doors for sound Bible Training schools in prisons
- ❖ guidance as we seek to spread the gospel and truth
- ❖ More labors who are filled with love and passion for the lost
- ❖ Strength and health for Keithian and all who serve the Lord through Grace Prison Ministries
- ❖ More monthly support to continue our mission endeavors
- ❖ Funds to support those serious believers transitioning from incarceration
- ❖ Doors to open for Jobs for those being released from prison and jail
- ❖ GPM weekly prison Bible studies
- ❖ Safe travels as we take the gospel of Christ and truth around the country and where ever God opens the door
- ❖ Provisions to continue to provide Bibles for those we serve

## Truth for the Soul *continued*

The believers have a new nature which wants to express itself in sacrificial love. The believer's old nature wants to basically be selfish, and declare war against all who don't cater to his selfish desires.

The believer's new nature which manifests love when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, builds and restores bridges through love and proclaiming peace.

Our old man holds grudges but the new man forgives.

Paul says Our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of esteeming and having regard for, and interest in, another when he declared:

**"Just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma".**  
(Eph. 5:2)

Christ showed interest in us in coming into the world to die on the cross (Philippians 2:3-11). He didn't think of Himself. What did He think about?

1. The Father's will was for Him to come into the World to die (He had personal love for His father) - Obedience
2. He loved us and wanted us to be saved and forgiven of our sins (unconditional love for us) - Love for others

**Christ's life was characterized by:**

- **Obedience to the Father**
- **Love for all mankind**

This was a love that was selfless, and sacrificial. The word "sacrifice" describes the offering of animals from the flock which were killed at the Holy Place and portions of it were burned on the altar.

The aroma of the burnt offering is figurative of the acceptableness of the offering. Christ's sacrifice on the cross satisfied the righteousness and justice of God the Father.

The Father was pleased with Christ's sacrifice for us. In love and in grace He freely offers the forgiveness of sins to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross.

There was nothing loveable about us that motivated the Father to give His Son. He loved us even when we were His enemies, and now we are to show kindness, compassion, and forgiveness to others.

**Why should believers obey the command to walk in love?**

- a. Because they are born of God and are His children (Gal. 3:26; 2 Peter 1:4).
- b. God's sacrificial love for us was demonstrated through the giving of His Son and should motivate us to do the same.
- c. Because you have been commanded to do so by the One who loved you so much that He was willing to die for your salvation (John 13:34; John 15:12,17).

May we stop thinking of ourselves, but of the will of God, and loving one another just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. ✂