

# THE SOUTHWESTERNER



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## GENUINE LOVE SHOWS BROTHERLY AFFECTION CODY WESTBROOK

Words are important and must be chosen carefully. Sometimes we use terminology so often that we do not stop to consider its meaning, we just say it out of habit. Perhaps this could be illustrated by how we address our fellow Christians. It is very common for us to refer to one another as “brother” or “sister,” and to the church as “the family of God.” These terms are good and biblical and should be used often. But, we really should take time to absorb the implication of such beautiful language. To call someone our “brother” or “sister” is to recognize our relationship as part of God’s family. It implies a very high standard of love and responsibility toward one another that is commanded by our Lord as that which identifies us as His followers (John 13:34-35). This kind of love cannot be counterfeited. Romans 12:10 reveals that in order for love to be truly genuine, it must possess this great family affection.

The two terms in this passage that are of interest are “kindly affectioned” and “brotherly love.” The first “uses words compounded from two other Greek words for love, *φιλία* (*philia*) and *στοργή* (*storgē*). The former is used for the affectionate love between friends; the latter, the tender affection among family members... It is a kind of instinctive affection, like that which parents and children feel toward each other.”<sup>1</sup> The second “is a combination of *φιλία* (*philia*) and *ἀδελφός* (*adelphos*, “brother”) and literally means “brotherly love.”<sup>2</sup> The implication of Paul’s use of these terms is very interesting. “Both key terms in this exhortation, which share the *philo-* stem, convey the sense of family relationships.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jack Cottrell, *Romans*, vol. 2, The College Press NIV Commentary

(Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1996), Ro 12:10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

In other words, Paul wants Christians to view their relationship with one another as a family relationship. One that is intimate and caring. One that is humble, selfless, and kind. One that is strong and full of devotion. A family relationship that reflects the reality that we have all been bought by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28) and graciously been added to God’s family (Eph. 1:5).

There are several important observations to be noticed in regard to this passage. First, this kind of love is not optional. The force of the passage and many others is that family affection among brethren is imperative (c.f. 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7). Second, we make the choice to manifest this love. God does not force it upon us. Rather, He calls us to diligently add this quality to our faith in order to complete a great symphony of Christian character (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Third, this love is seen in action. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). I show my brother that I truly love him through caring for his physical and spiritual needs. I rejoice with him and cry with him (Rom. 12:15). I hurt when he hurts and I do everything I can to build him up and protect him from the Devil’s advances (Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:8). Fourth, this love cannot be exhibited arbitrarily. We are required to love *all* of our brethren, not just the ones that we like the most. John wrote,

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen” (1 John 4:20)?

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 777.

I cannot genuinely love God unless I genuinely love *all* of my brethren.

To truly appreciate the depth of family affection we should consider the affection that we have toward our own physical family members. What would you do to help your brother or sister? How deep is your appreciation and respect for your mother and father? How devoted are you to protecting and providing for the needs of your son and daughter? Our affection for our spiritual family is similar to our affection for our physical family. In fact, Paul used similar terminology in Romans 1:31 when describing those who are “without natural affection,” which is literally, “without *storge*.” We look with disgust at those who mistreat their physically family members. We should view those who mistreat their spiritual family in the same way.

Genuine love demands family affection. When we determine to love one another with purity and fervor (1 Pet. 1:22) our family affection will grow and mature. Let us pursue that end with zealous determination.

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## WITH WHAT MEASURE

Don Walker '79

Jesus said,  
Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom; for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again”(Luke 6:38).

There are some interesting lessons here.

First, we cannot out give God! We give, and God sees to it we are given unto. In addition, what God gives is “pressed down, shaken together, and running over.” When you get a box of cereal at the store the manufacturer informs you that “some settling of contents may have occurred.” Sure enough, you open it and the box is half empty. That, my friends, is “shaken down,” but it is not “running over.” God will fill your cup till it “over runs,” even after having been shaken down!

Second, the things “men” give to us are actually provided by God. The atheist may say, “I worked hard, I labored, I sowed, I reaped! I have provided my blessings;

not God!” But what does the atheist use in order to plant the seed and reap the harvest? He must have the seed, fertile ground, rain and sunshine - all given by God. The means by which the atheist or unbeliever acquires the necessities of life is no different than that of the obedient child of God. The former ignores God’s benevolent hand behind it all, the later believes that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (Jas. 1:17).

Third, it should be noted that Jesus did NOT say, “With what type you give, so shall it be given unto you again.” Some contend that if we give monetarily to the Lord, He will in turn make us rich. That is never promised in the Scriptures. It may be that God will provide us with abundance of material things - as He has so done to those of us who enjoy the standard of living we now enjoy. Genuine wealth, however, cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents. It can only be measured in currency that is spiritual, namely eternal life and eventually a home in heaven with our Father Who has blessed us in so many ways.

Fourth, God will give to us according to what measure we give to others. If we are greedy and selfish, giving little to others in the way of assistance and encouragement, God will use that same “measure” to give back to us. Have you ever wondered why it is that some people are constantly struggling with life, finances, emotions, to name but a few areas in which they have difficulty? Is it possible that life seems to have “passed them by” because, like the rich man in Luke 16, they have passed others by along life’s pathway? Finally, we learn that our God is a beneficent God! He is not stingy, nor does He reprimand us when we ask His blessings. A most beautiful passage in this regard has to do with God’s gracious bestowal of wisdom to those who ask. But within that passage we see a wonderful trait of our God that few realize:

But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him (Jas. 1:5, emphasis mine, TW).

This article is not really an article having to do with our contribution, though certainly the principles apply. This article is really an attempt to help us recognize the wonderful God Whom we serve, and His desire to give to His children those things they need - and in many instances those things they don’t NEED but that make life enjoyable! I’ll close with a pointed, but humorous illustration: A

baker living in a village not far from Quebec bought his butter from a neighboring farmer. One day he became suspicious that the butter was not a full one pound weight, and decided he would investigate the matter. For several days he weighed the butter, and discovered the rolls of butter the farmer brought were short the designated amount. This so angered him that he had the farmer arrested. "I assume you have weights," said the judge. "No sir," replied the farmer. "How do you manage to weigh the butter that you sell?" "That's easily explained, Your Honor," said the farmer. "When the baker began buying his butter from me, I thought I'd get my bread from him. It is the same one pound loaf which he brings me that I've been using as a weight for the butter I sell him."

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## THE NINETY AND NINE

John Baker

I've often marveled at the depth and profundity of many songs we find in our songbooks. I've also sometimes been disappointed that, for whatever reasons, some great songs seem to have faded from the church's repertoire over the years. One such song is, "The Ninety and Nine" (number 241 in our songbook). Based upon the parable in Luke 15:3-7, this masterful combination of words and music forces Christians to examine the nature of our love for souls contrasted with the way God loves souls — the words are both humbling and thought-provoking.

Let's examine several thoughts brought out by the author of this song as we consider our love for those who have strayed.

"Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine; Are they not enough for Thee?" — It's easy to get comfortable with the reality of loss. Retail stores have, "loss prevention" departments, and managers will tell you that their accountants routinely expect to lose up to ten percent of a given store's merchandise through theft and neglect. Such losses are simply written off the balance sheets at the end of the quarter. Likewise, many churches seem to find it easy to "write off" those who are straying. They seem to be asking the Lord, "Don't You already have enough?" Jesus clearly taught that God's love will not allow Him to simply "write off" even one lost soul in this world (Luke

15:4). His message is important: as long as there is even one lost sheep in the world, the church has much work to do. Let's not be complacent in our love for lost souls — with God, there is no such thing as an acceptable loss.

*"But none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed; Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro' Ere He found His sheep that was lost."* — Luke 15:3-7 teaches that while God is certainly interested in numbers, He never loses sight of the value of an individual. When souls are lost, the Good Shepherd will go to any length to prove His love and concern for them. Singing this verse, I'm reminded of the anguished words of Jesus from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34). We'll never know the full depth of agony He endured to ransom us from sin, for we simply don't understand what it is like to be utterly forsaken by God. Jesus endured that kind of sorrow so that all men could be redeemed from sin, but His sacrifice was personal as well. God's love for individuals is so great that Jesus still would have endured the cross even if only one person was lost. Oh, that more Christians had that kind of love for souls!

*"There arose a glad cry to the gate of heaven, 'Rejoice! I have found My sheep!'"* — Jesus said there would be greater joy in heaven over just one sinner who repents than over ninety nine who are already saved (Luke 15:7). Christians ought to derive a great deal of joy from the conversion and restoration of sinners. Often it's tempting to have an "elder brother complex" and be bitter and resentful toward those who have come back to the Lord (Luke 15:28-32). If we have the same view of souls that God does, won't we be genuinely glad when people turn to Him? Whatever causes heaven to rejoice ought to cause the faithful Christian to rejoice.

Perhaps it is time for all to examine their attitudes toward straying sheep. Whether the sheep are straying Christians or those who have never known God is not the point. Jesus wants all people to be safe, and safety is only found when He is the Shepherd of our lives.

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**Record for the Week of March 17, 2019**

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Bible Class .....        | 128   |
| Morning Assembly.....    | 201   |
| Evening Assembly .....   | 139   |
| <b>Iglesia de Cristo</b> |       |
| Morning Assembly.....    | N/A   |
| Contribution .....       | \$N/A |

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**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:**

**Jackie Walker** moved to Memphis, TN this past weekend. Please continue to pray for her during this transition.

**Health Concerns:** Lois Ewald, Charlene Johnson, Diana Rodriguez, Bud Wade, Clarence Whetstone Angela Young.

**Shut-ins:** Jeannette Hansen, Rosemary Garrett, Jon Little, Bobby Johnson, Elvira Martinez, Ginny Oswald, Jan Smith.

**Others:** Sonny & Lee Barr, Bill Ellison, Bonnie Gomer, CK Holt, Nell McCown, Bill & Nancy Ponds, Cheri Sarten, Kay Westbrook, Gib Young.

**GO PAPERLESS**

Would you like to switch to the digital version of *The Southwesterner*?

Email us at [office@swcofc.org](mailto:office@swcofc.org) and begin receiving the bulletin in your inbox every week.

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**WORSHIP AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES:** **Sunday**, Bible Classes 9:30 am, Worship 10:30 am and 6:00 pm  
**Tuesday**, 10:00 am (September-May), Men's and Ladies' Bible Classes | **Wednesday**, Bible Classes, 7:00 pm  
**RADIO PROGRAM** – *The Word of Life* | Sunday, 7:30 am | KLBJ, 590-AM and 99.7 FM | online at [swcofc.org/word-of-life](http://swcofc.org/word-of-life)