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# Ready for the Growth and Development of Godly Love and Charity

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A reprint from *The ENJOY THE BIBLE QUARTERLY* — 2008, 3rd Quarter

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This is the third and concluding part of a follow-up to our past article, *Are You Being “Taught of God to Love One Another?”* (Second Quarter 2006) This article briefly amplifies upon how our godly love starts to grow, develop, and mature within us, after God has successfully planted it and firmly established it within us through the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8. For the proper background to this issue, please review the first and second follow-up articles in the two previous editions of the *ETB Quarterly*.

Once the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8 has fully done its job within us, (with the result that our Father has successfully taught us to “think soberly” as “sons,” and to cherish each other as the “members one of another” that we are, and to selflessly function together in our “offices” as a body), then the seedling of godly love within us has become firmly rooted and established.

But more than this, like an established seedling our godly love *is now full of the potential for growth and development*. And in connection with this we should have a strong desire to have our godly love start to grow and thereby be able to begin manifesting the further features of our Father’s love in our lives, together with all of their characteristic expressions of charity.

For the fact of the matter is this: When the selflessness of godly love becomes firmly rooted, established, and operational within us, then by its very nature *it also starts to become compelling*. That is, it begins to function within us as a powerful motivating force, especially in the sense that we now want to express our selflessness in more ways, and we want to find more and more

means of doing so in our lives.

So if our godly selflessness is as strong as Romans 12:3–8 is designed to make it, then we should now have a compelling thirst for more of our Father’s teaching so that we can learn to love as He does more and more.

## **An Important Indicator**

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Now it is important for us to understand the reality of this, so that we can use it to give ourselves a sonship checkup. For if we are wise “sons,” then we should want to check to make sure that we have a fittingly strong and earnest desire for our godly love to grow and develop. Then on the basis of what we find we should determine whether or not we are truly ready to go on and are fit to acquire the next feature of our Father’s love.

Therefore let’s look a little more closely at this *compelling thirst* that we should have. For not only should it have naturally developed within us if we are fully benefiting from the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8, but as we will soon see we really need to have it before proceeding on into Romans 12:9 and following.

## **The Motivating Power of Godly Selflessness**

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As our Father teaches us to love as He does, He works at progressively producing within us each feature of His love beginning with its most elemental and foundational feature all the way on to its most elaborate. And in connection with this, as each feature is successfully produced within us *we should begin to experience within ourselves*

*the same kind of inner workings that each feature produces within our Father.* Or in other words, we should begin to have the very same kind of motions and stirrings of love operating within us as operate within Him.

So when by the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8 our Father has begun teaching us to love as He does, and He has successfully established His love’s most elemental component within us — i.e. godly selflessness — then we too should begin to experience the very same kind of powerful motions and stirrings within our hearts as are produced within His heart by His own selflessness.

Now with this being so, the first of the powerful motions and stirrings that we should experience is *the compelling desire to want to selflessly give of ourselves to others in more ways and by more means.* For this is the very motion that first and foremost operates within our Father in view of His own selflessness.

In fact with selflessness being the elemental and foundational component of God’s love, it functions within Him like lifeblood that has both generative power and vital force to it.

It powerfully works within Him both to beget and to give functional life to all of the other expressive features of His love, just as is evidenced by the meaning and outworking of His name “Jehovah” in His program with Israel.

Or to put this another way, since “God is love” His selflessness is the source, or fount, from which all of the other features and characteristics of His love spring forth.

Wherefore our Father’s selflessness is a *powerful motivating force within Him.* In a sense, therefore, it pulsates and throbs within Him. Figuratively speaking it vigorously flows through Him and motivates Him, as it courses within His veins like lifeblood being pumped from His heart of love.

## **The Same Power At Work Within Us**

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Now as our Father teaches us to love as He does, once He has established godly selflessness within us then it also should begin to pulsate and throb within us just as it does within Him. For once He has succeeded in teaching us to “think soberly” about each other and to cherish each other, and thereby to selflessly serve one another as the “members one of another” that we are, *our Father has made it so that our heart is a heart of godly love.*

Therefore He has made it so that our heart is able to beat in harmony with His own heart, and to function like His own heart.

With this being so, if we have fully benefited from the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8 then figuratively speaking our heart should now be at work pumping godly selflessness through our veins.

## **The Initial Effectual Working of Its Power Within Us**

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Now just as by the power and force of His own selflessness our Father wants to abundantly express His love, (which He does by means of its other features and by all of His charitable dealings with His creation), so too does our throbbing godly selflessness want to express itself. It makes us want to be able to express our fledgling love in more and more areas of our lives, and to be charitable in more and more ways.

And so as our godly selflessness starts throbbing within us, and as it moves us and stirs us to seek more ways of expressing it, *it naturally works to motivate us to want to acquire the next feature of our Father’s love and charity.* For this is how we will be able to express our love in more ways.

Or to put this another way, our throbbing godly selflessness actually causes us to be dissatisfied with only serving one another in connection with

our “offices” as per Romans 12:3–8. By the strength of its working within us it starts us thinking that we want to do more for one another in our dealings with each other. It causes us to want to be even more profitable and beneficial to one another as we find ourselves cherishing one another even more as the “members one of another” that we are.

### **A Compelling Thirst Indeed**

So then if Romans 12:3–8 has fully done its job within us, the throbbing power of our godly selflessness truly should be compelling within us. It should have us so excited and eager to go on that we are ‘champing at the bit,’ so to speak, to get the growth and development of our godly love and charity underway.

### **But This Is Not All**

Now not only should the motivating power of our godly selflessness naturally be at work within us before we embark on Romans 12:9 and following, *but it’s really necessary that this be so.*

For God’s selflessness is not only the first feature of His love, it is also the foundational one. Hence as was noted His selflessness is the source, or fount, from which all of the other features and characteristics of His love spring forth.

Thus all of the other features of our Father’s love are actually more pronounced, or more specific functions of His great selflessness. And all of His responses of charity are specific expressions of His great selflessness which He generates and manifests as He interacts with His creation.

Wherefore as our Father teaches us to love as He does, the very same thing is designed to take place within us. That is, our own godly selflessness is likewise designed to function *as a fount within us*, from which each of the other features of our Father’s love can be caused to spring forth as He teaches them to us.

Therefore it is all the more necessary that we are fully benefiting from the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8 before proceeding on.

For we should readily see that if we only have a small or weak measure of godly selflessness operating within us, it will only be able to produce and support an equally small or weak measure of the further features of our Father’s love and charity.

However if we have an appropriately strong measure of godly selflessness, then it will be able to produce and support equally strong measures of each of the other features.

### **Ready To Go On?**

Now for the sake of the aim of this series of articles we will assume that we are ready to go on. (Nevertheless in accordance with being God’s “sons,” each of us has the sonship responsibility to evaluate how well we are benefiting from the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8, and thereby determine whether or not we are ready to go on.)

So then as we continue surveying the beginning of how our Father teaches us to love as He does, let’s now briefly look at Romans 12:9–10 to see the next feature of His love, and to see how He teaches us to acquire it.

### **The Next Feature of our Father’s Love**

9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

*(Romans 12:9–10)*

Now fittingly enough our Father begins by exhorting us to let our godly love be what it wants to be, and to do this by neither ignoring nor putting off its desire and need to grow. Hence He has Paul exhort us saying...

9a Let love be without dissimulation.

(Romans 12:9a)

And indeed as we have just seen this is exactly what our godly love so eagerly wants. It earnestly wants to grow so as not to be in a state of “dissimulation,” or in a state of lacking full simulation and resemblance to our Father’s love. Instead of being in this state our godly love wants to start acquiring the further features of our Father’s love so that it can fully simulate it, and can fully manifest this in our lives.

Wherefore it is only fitting that our Father now exhorts us not to be inconsistent or hypocritical by merely assenting to our love’s need to grow, but not doing anything about it. But rather when He says...

9a Let love be without dissimulation.

(Romans 12:9a)

...He exhorts us to respond positively and promptly to our love’s yearning to be “without dissimulation” by doing what is necessary so that it can start to grow and can produce the next feature of His love.

Now when it comes to us acquiring the next feature of our Father’s love, (and as the rest of verse 9 goes on to say), the first thing we need to do is to make a significant adjustment in our thinking regarding “evil” and “good.” For Paul tells us to...

9b Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

(Romans 12:9b)

And so in order for us to do this we once again need to ‘renew our minds’ as per Romans 12:2. But this time we need to renew them regarding “evil” and “good,” so that we can learn to think about them and respond to them in the very same way that God our Father does.

For the fact of the matter is this: If we are to acquire the next feature of our Father’s love, “evil” and “good” must impact our minds and hearts in the very way that they impact His. Hence “evil” must make a strong negative impact upon us, and “good” must make a strong positive impact upon us.

And this is because the next feature of His love that our Father is teaching us to acquire is that of *lovingkindness*. Which as we are about to see is a feature of our Father’s love because of how passionately He ‘abhors evil’ and how fervently He ‘embraces good.’

Hence this means that when we as God’s “sons” learn to passionately ‘abhor that which is evil’ like He does, and learn to fervently ‘cleave to that which is good’ like He does, then this will work in conjunction with our godly selflessness, (just like it does in our Father), to effectually generate and produce *godly lovingkindness* within us.

And once lovingkindness is generated, it will then be able to start springing forth from our own hearts in our dealings one with another, just like it does from our Father’s.

Then this in turn will make it so that our behaviour one towards another will be able to begin to include the characteristic expressions and displays of lovingkindness, starting with what Paul goes on to say in Romans 12:10 when he says...

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

(Romans 12:10)

So with godly lovingkindness being what our Father now wants us to acquire, let’s take a closer look at the issue of lovingkindness itself.

For we need to know exactly what it is. Plus we need to better understand that it will get generated within us when we learn to “abhor that which is evil” and “cleave to that which is good” just like our Father does.

## Lovingkindness

As its compound name indicates, *lovingkindness* is a product of love, and in particular growing and strengthening love. But more to the point it is the issue of kindness that is generated and produced by love which not only cherishes another, but which also has developed a strong and compelling reason for wanting to be *very kind to the one it loves*.

Now this strong and compelling reason to be very kind has come about because the one doing the loving has learned something which has profoundly impacted him. Specifically he has come to see both “good” and “evil” in a different light, so to speak. And this is because he has learned to look at them *through the eyes of love*.

For the fact of the matter is this: when “good” and “evil” are viewed through the eyes of love, they no longer are simply thought of for what they mean by definition. And no longer are they words that provoke little or no emotional response.

But rather when “evil” and “good” are viewed through the eyes of love they are specifically looked upon, (and they are pointedly thought about), *for what they do to those that one loves, and for the kind of impact and consequences that they have upon them*.

So very simply put when one looks upon “evil” through the eyes of love, and he thinks about it for what it will do to those he loves, he clearly sees that it is something that will actually hurt and/or harm them.

Likewise when he looks upon “good” through the eyes of love, and thinks about what it will do to those he loves, he clearly sees that it is something that will genuinely help or profit them, and so actually contribute to their welfare.

Wherefore when “evil” is viewed through the eyes of love it becomes disgusting, and hence something to be loathed and avoided as one deals

with those he loves.

While on the other hand “good” becomes precious and delightful when viewed through the eyes of love. Hence it becomes something that one fervently desires to express to his loved ones.

Accordingly therefore it is easy to see why lovingkindness can be described as *a quality of growing or increasing love involving a strong and compelling disposition to do good to one’s beloved, while at the same time eschewing evil; which therefore makes one delight in being helpful, profitable, and beneficial to the one that he loves*.

Now this is indeed what lovingkindness is, and is just what we need to understand about it. To underscore this, a couple of descriptive examples from our Father’s own lovingkindness will help us to understand and appreciate this all the more.

## Our Father’s Own Lovingkindness

The prophetic 36th Psalm is a Psalm that extols the virtues of the LORD’s lovingkindness which the remnant of Israel will experience during the final installment in Israel’s program. As it does this it takes the various expressions of God’s lovingkindness and pointedly sets them in contrast to the way that the “wicked” will treat the remnant in that day.

Hence regarding the “wicked” the remnant will say...

- 1 The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is no fear of God before his eyes*.
- 2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
- 3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.
- 4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is not good*; he abhorreth not evil.

(Psalm 36:1-4)

As the Psalm says, the “wicked” will engage in much ungodliness, including that which will come from ‘leaving off to be wise, and to do good,’ as well as from being one who “abhorreth not evil.”

But as the Psalm goes on to relate, the LORD stands in stark contrast to this. For He will treat His remnant with “lovingkindness.” And He will treat them with “lovingkindness” because He has not ‘left off to do good,’ but rather He fervently delights in doing good. Likewise instead of being like the “wicked” who “abhorreth not evil,” the LORD does abhor it and so will passionately eschew it.

Hence in that day the remnant will praise the LORD for His lovingkindness by saying...

7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

(Psalm 36:7)

Now much the same things about God’s lovingkindness can also be seen later on in Psalm 107. For it is a Psalm that instructs on the issue of how God delights in doing good and being profitable, even doting upon being so, all because of His lovingkindness.

Wherefore the Psalm sets forth a series of specific ways in which God out of His lovingkindness shows that He is profoundly and abundantly good. And each example ends with the Psalmist saying...

Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

But then after completing the series of testimonies to the issue of how profoundly and purposefully good God is, the Psalmist concludes his instruction on the issue of God’s lovingkindness by saying...

43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

(Psalm 107:43)

In fact in just about every place where God’s lovingkindness or His lovingkindnesses are spoken about, there is information in either the immediate or near context which testifies to the fact that God’s disdain for evil and His delight in doing good is what is behind His lovingkindnesses.

Therefore the testimonies of our Father’s own lovingkindness clearly show (1) how that lovingkindness indeed is *the strong and compelling disposition to do good to one’s beloved while at the same time eschewing evil; which therefore makes one delight in being helpful, profitable, and beneficial to the one that he loves*; and (2) how that lovingkindness is generated and produced when one who selflessly loves others looks upon “evil” and “good” through the eyes of his love for them.

### Acquiring Godly Lovingkindness

So then when it comes to us acquiring godly lovingkindness, we need to renew our minds regarding “evil” and “good” so that we look upon them just like our Father does. For as Paul says in Romans 12:9b we need to...

9b Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

(Romans 12:9b)

Therefore since the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8 has given us ‘eyes of godly selfless love’ through which we should already be looking upon each other, we now need to use them to look at “evil” and “good,” and in doing so pointedly think about just how it is that “evil” and “good” materially affect our loved ones.

And as we purposefully engage in such sonship thinking, (and also as we naturally commune with

our Father about this in sonship prayer), this will effectually work within us to cause us to develop a genuine godly disdain for “evil.”

For when we come to view “evil” through the eyes of our godly love for one another, it will become disgusting to us, just like it is to our Father. We therefore will come to “abhor” it and accordingly will want nothing to do with it, because our godly love for one another will cause us to be repulsed by it.

Likewise when we view “good” through the eyes of our godly love for one another, we will come to treasure it as the very thing, (and as the only thing), that we want to give to each other at all times.

Hence like our Father we too will start to genuinely “cleave to that which is good,” not wanting to do any thing but “that which is good” in our dealings with one another.

### **Our Godly Lovingkindness in Action**

Now once the renewing of our minds regarding “evil” and “good” has us ‘abhorring that which is evil’ in our dealings one with another and ‘cleaving to that which is good,’ the corresponding expressions and manifestations of godly lovingkindness are able to begin to spring forth from our hearts.

Wherefore as ones who now ‘cleave to that which is good,’ (and so have begun to dote upon being helpful, profitable, and beneficial to one another as “the members one of another” that we are), our godly lovingkindness should have us starting to become emotionally and passionately concerned for each other’s sonship welfare.

Hence we should begin to have just as much care and concern for each other’s “godly edifying” as we have for our own.

With this being so, and since we are collectively “sons” of our Father, we should have the strong desire to start drawing closer to each other so that

we can be the kind of help, profit, and benefit to one another that we want to be.

In accordance with this Paul goes on in Romans 12:10 and exhorts us saying...

10a *Be* kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love;

(Romans 12:10a)

And indeed this is now exactly what we should be doing.

For since out of godly lovingkindness we are now doting upon being helpful to one another; and also since each of us is a “son” of our Father, which means that we are brothers in our sonship; we should now *love each other as brothers*. That is, *we should love each other as ones who are mutually interested in each other’s sonship life, and who mutually care about each other’s sonship welfare*.

Hence by being “kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love” we purposefully draw closer to one another for the express purpose of sharing our sonship lives. For this is what the “brotherly love” of “sons” entails.

Therefore with brotherly affection we should want to spend more and more time together in the fellowship of our mutual sonship education and living, because of our sincere desire to be helpful and profitable to each other when it comes to supporting and advancing each other’s sonship education and life.

Indeed such should be the case with us as the effectual working of Romans 12:9 causes godly lovingkindness to start springing forth from our hearts, and we ‘being kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love’ put into practice our earnest desire to contribute to each other’s sonship life and welfare.

## Even More Lovingkindness

Moreover as Paul goes on to say in the rest of Romans 12:10, out of our lovingkindness we also should be...

10b ...; in honour preferring one another;

(Romans 12:10b)

For when out of godly lovingkindness we put into practice our desire to share in and profitably contribute to each other's sonship life, our godly selfless love for each other should make it so that we actually start to take more pleasure in seeing others make progress in their sonship education and living than we do in ourselves.

Hence as we fellowship with others in their sonship education and living, and in doing so we are mutually honoured with opportunities to participate in operations of our Father's business, then out of our godly selflessness and lovingkindness we should prefer to have the honour go first to another rather than ourselves.

## Successfully Established in Godly Love and Charity

Now when both Romans 12:3–8 and verses 9–10 have done their jobs within us, (and thereby both godly selflessness and lovingkindness have been successfully produced within us), then we need to understand and appreciate that our Father has succeeded in accomplishing the first stage in the process of teaching us to love as He does.

For by first producing godly selflessness within us together with its basic charitable expressions, our Father has established the fundamental and foundational feature of His love and charity in us. But then by making it so that godly lovingkindness and its basic charitable expressions successfully spring forth from our godly selflessness, He has succeeded in 'starting the fount,' so to speak, from which all of the other features of His love and charity will be able to come forth.

## The Further Features of Our Father's Love

Now with this being so, as our Father's teaching proceeds on He has Paul set forth information whereby the further features of His love and charity can begin to be produced within us. And so as the doctrine in Romans 12:11ff testifies, God provides for us to acquire such features of His love as merciful tenderheartedness, and gentleness and meekness, to name just a few.

In fact throughout the remainder of Romans our Father teaches us to acquire and put into operation all of the main features of His love and charity.

But what's more, when through the effectual working of His teaching each of the main features of His love gets successfully generated within us, our Father then sees to it that they also become *fully operational*. For throughout the balance of the first level of our sonship education He works to see to it that we are able to *fully* exercise and *fully* develop each feature of His love, so that each one of them is able to become well established within us and also well manifested by us.

For this reason as we continue to proceed on in the curriculum for our sonship education, (and so deal with the teaching and edification that is set forth in I Corinthians, II Corinthians, and Galatians), we receive from our Father a number of fitting and very practical instructions, injunctions, exhortations, and the like regarding walking in love. By these He not only exhorts us to walk in love one toward another, but He also has designed them to make it so that we appropriately exercise and sufficiently develop each feature of our godly love and charity.

Then as we heed them, like Paul says in I Corinthians 14 we will be able to...

1 Follow after charity,...

(I Corinthians 14:1a)

And as we “follow after charity” each of its characteristics will be able to properly develop within us, which in turn will enable us to fulfill the exhortation...

14 Let all your things be done in charity.

(1 Corinthians 16:14)

Now it is only when each feature of godly love is properly developed within us, (and we are also well established and experienced in exercising them in the details of living our sonship lives), that our godly love and charity will be in the position to “increase” and “abound.” Or in other words, it will be in the position to fully mature within us.

In fact when our godly love is fit to “increase” and “abound,” then as is set forth especially in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, our Father provides for the mature and the extraordinary functions of His love and charity to develop and become operational within us.

For example in this particular portion of our sonship curriculum our Father provides for us to be able to operate upon “the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” like Paul speaks about in Ephesians 3.

Also beginning in Ephesians our Father not only provides for our brotherly love for one another to increase and intensify, but by what He teaches us He enables us to become so closely “compacted” and “knit together in love” that we are able to collectively produce one of the body of Christ’s most mature and extraordinary functions, i.e. “the edifying of itself in love.”

Moreover as Paul describes in Philippians 1, our Father also makes the provision for our love to “abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment” with the result that we will acquire the mature godly capacity and ability to “approve things that are excellent.”

These are but a few of the mature functions and exceptional operations belonging to our godly

love and charity when our Father works to make it “increase” and “abound.”

### The Main Focus in This Study

Though our Father works at teaching us to love as He does in all its fulness, and He does this throughout the entire scope of our sonship education, the simple aim of this three-part expansion study has been to focus upon how He begins the whole process. For our desire has been to supply a bit more information whereby each of us can intelligently answer the question, *Are you being “taught of God to love one another”?*

As such our primary objectives have been (1) to make sure that you have a basic understanding and appreciation for how our Father gets this process underway beginning in Romans 12:3ff; and (2) to briefly amplify upon how through the effectual working of Romans 12:3–8, and then 9–10, our Father generates the foundational features of godly selflessness and godly lovingkindness within us and makes them operational in our dealings with each other; and then (3) by doing these things urge you to judge whether or not the foundational issues of godly selflessness, lovingkindness, and brotherly love are sufficiently established and operational within you, so that like the Thessalonians it can be said of you:

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

(1 Thessalonians 4:9)

This once again is our desire. But also in accordance with our Father’s desire to teach us to love as He does in all its fulness, we hope for the following as well:

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

*(1 Thessalonians 3:12–13)*

— *K. R. Blades*