

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 14 (March 30-April 5, 2014)

God's Word says, "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Last week's devotions focused on **His love for us**, which had to precede our love for Him and others. His Holy Spirit now lives in our hearts enabling us to love as He loves. In our devotions this week, we will look at verses about **our love for Him** and others.

**Sunday** – March 30 (read John 14:15-24)

*If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)*

In the reading text for today, Jesus ties our love for Him to **obedience** three times (v. 15, 21 & 23). He also teaches that the Holy Spirit will be given to all who have a desire to obey Him (v. 16-17). The Spirit will be the One accomplishing the works in you, because you are incapable of obeying God in your own flesh due to your sinful nature. Did you notice in v. 20 that you become part of the Trinity? Did you notice in v. 21 that God reveals Himself to anyone who desires to obey Him? That is how you can know His Word, His will and His way. Determine today that you will seek to show your love for Him by your obedience through the power of the Holy spirit.

**Monday** – March 31 (read John 15:9-17)

*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)*

Today's assigned reading brings you face to face with the necessity and benefits of love. Jesus reminds us of yesterday's point that you will remain in His love by obeying the commands that you already understand (v. 9-10). Even a child knows that obedience to the father's commands brings joy and happiness (v. 11). Very few children (or adults) figure out, however, that true happiness, joy and love come from laying down your life for another (v. 13). This simply means that you are putting their needs ahead of your own. God says that the person who is willing to do this can ask Him for whatever he/she needs (v. 16). It is truly sad that most Christians live far below the standards that can bring perfect peace and love (see Isaiah 26:3 & 1 John 4:18).

**Tuesday** – April 1 (read Romans 8:26-28)

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

My Arkansas teenagers gave me a plaque containing today's printed verse, and it still hangs in my current office. I knew very few scriptures other than this one in 1972 when I was leading the youth group at First Baptist Church, but God used the truth of Romans 8:28 to perform more miracles than I have time to tell. The verse does not say that all things **are good**, but rather that God can **bring good** out of heartache and pain. I would not be in the ministry today if I had not lost my second son after seven days of life. My pastor, Daniel Lowe, gave me a little book by Dale Evans entitled Angel Unaware. He wrote Romans 8:28 on the inside cover and it immediately became my life's verse. I **thought** I loved God back then and I **knew** that I was "called according to His purpose," but my love has steadily grown every day since. The wonderful promise of Romans 8:28 is for anyone who is willing to claim the blessing of love!

**Wednesday** – April 2 (read Matthew 22:34-40)

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37)*

Jesus labeled the printed verse as the greatest commandment in the Bible. If you simply obey this one, the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment will follow naturally, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 39). I said in the devotion for February 17, “If God is **first** in your lives, there is no problem with what or who is second.” Jesus is telling you the same thing in verse 37. Do you truly love Him with your whole heart and mind? If so, all the other commands will be naturally obeyed, because your soul will be secure in His hands. If you do not **feel** safe and secure, it is because your **heart** and **mind** have a long way to go to reach total obedience to His will.

**Thursday** – April 3 (read Romans 13:8-10)

*Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)*

Paul makes the same point Jesus made in yesterday’s text, but I want to show this to you because of its importance to America in 2014. If you follow the news at all, you know that God’s Word is being pushed out of politics on every front. The result is that our nation is 17 trillion dollars in debt! Without God, we **all** spend money we don’t have, to buy things we don’t need, to impress people we don’t like! How futile is that! God tells you to be sure to pay fully all your debts **except** the continuing debt to love one another (v. 8). All the commands in the Bible are kept by first loving God with all your heart, mind and soul, and by loving your neighbor as you love yourself. Can God make it any simpler to follow in obedience?

**Friday** – April 4 (read 1 Corinthians 2:6-15)

*However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him—but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)*

Are you beginning to understand why God wants us to love Him with all our hearts and minds? He has so much in store for us that we can never discover unless we love Him and obey His commands. His commands are not given to restrict our happiness (see 1 John 5:3); they are given so that we can experience real joy! Each new nugget of truth God allows me to find through Bible Study, prayers and fellowship makes me that much hungrier to know Him better. The largest room in Heaven may be the one that contains the blessings He **wants** His children to have, but we seldom **ask** for them (see James 4:2). Make sure that you seek His face! Discover truths that few others know!

**Saturday** – April 5 (read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

*For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. (2 Corinthians 5:14)*

Today’s assigned reading passage is all about offering salvation to those who do not know Jesus. No matter how bad a person is, he/she can be born again and become a brand new creation (v. 17). We saw that happen last Sunday when God granted salvation to a precious soul on his deathbed. The printed verse tells us that we are **compelled** to witness if we are truly “convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died” (v. 14). Are you really convinced? Do you know anyone who is not saved? What is preventing **you** from offering reconciliation (v. 18-19) to those you care about? You have been appointed to be an **ambassador** for Christ (v. 20). His entire message is consolidated in verse 21, perhaps the most important single verse in the Bible. Let’s get busy and respond to His compelling love!