

CHRISTIANITY
IF YOU
LOVE ME



JRR LEWIS

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Prologue: One More Year

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

—Romans 3:23

This is where it starts.

Not with excuses.

Not with comparisons.

Not with pretending.

All have sinned.

All have missed the mark.

All have fallen short—not of each other’s expectations, but of *God’s glory*.

Sin Is Not Just Bad Behavior

The Bible doesn’t say we just made mistakes.

It says we’ve all failed to live up to what God made us to be.

That’s what sin means—*missing the target*.

It’s not just rebellion. It’s ruin.

We were made for love, for obedience, for holiness.

But we chose something less.

And in doing so, we broke the world... and ourselves.

Jesus Came to Restore What Was Lost

He didn’t come to improve our behavior.

He came to bring dead things back to life.

He didn’t die to make us slightly better people.

He died to make us **new**.

And new life has a shape.

A texture.

A fragrance.
It looks like Him.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

This book is about that new creation —
—what it looks like
—how it behaves
—and why it matters that it does.

Salvation Is Not the End. It’s the Beginning.

Many believers stop at the cross.
They accept the gift of forgiveness.
They say, “Thank You, Jesus,”
—and then live the same way they always did.

But Jesus didn’t say, *“Say a prayer and coast.”*
He said, *“Follow Me.”*

This book is about what that *following* looks like.

It is not a guilt trip.
But it may convict.
It is not a list of rules.
But it will challenge you to examine your life in light of the Word.

Fruit Is Not Optional

Jesus said:

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matthew 7:19)

That is not a metaphor to ignore.
It is a warning to receive.

A Christian life that does not change...
A heart that does not grow in love...
A soul that claims grace but shows no fruit...

That life is not healthy. And it may not be saved.

But There Is Still Time

Jesus once told a story about a fig tree.

“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.”

“Cut it down,” he said. “Why should it use up the ground?”

But the gardener replied, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good...”

(Luke 13:6–9)

That fig tree is many of us.

God comes looking for fruit—
—love, repentance, faithfulness, obedience—
and finds... nothing.

But Jesus, the Gardener, pleads on our behalf:

“Give it one more year.”

That is this moment.

This season.

This book.

A chance to repent.

A chance to return.

A chance to grow.

Why This Book May Hurt

Because the mirror doesn't flatter.
And the pruning shears of the Spirit cut deep.

But it is a holy pain.
Not the pain of judgment—yet.
But the pain of *invitation*.

Jesus is not here to shame you.
He's here to call you.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.”
(Revelation 3:19)

This Is About Love

Not just emotional love.
Not just doctrinal love.
But **visible, obedient, fruit-bearing** love.

Jesus said:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)

Not *“If you admire Me.”*
Not *“If you agree with Me.”*

If you love Me. Obey Me.

That's the whole book in one verse.

One Year More—What Will You Do With It?

The fig tree in Jesus' story was given a window.
A short one.

One more year.

One more chance.

Then the Master returns.

You are reading this in your “*one more year.*”

Will you keep living on borrowed faith?

Or will you dig deep, open your heart, and let love bear fruit?

Let's begin.

Chapter 1: Love Bears Fruit

“By their fruit you will recognize them.” – Matthew 7:16

Love is not invisible.

It is not a feeling hidden in the heart, protected from the scrutiny of life.

Love—true, Spirit-born love—does something.

It bears fruit.

Jesus said it plainly:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” (John 15:5)

No maybe.

No exceptions.

If we remain in Him, fruit will grow.

What Fruit Looks Like

The fruit of the Spirit is not a mystical force or vague virtue.

It's deeply practical. It's deeply relational.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22–23)

These are not qualities you admire from afar.

They are things that happen *through you* when God lives *in you*.

- Love: for the unlovable
- Joy: even in suffering
- Peace: when the storm rages
- Patience: with the difficult and slow

- Kindness: when nothing is owed
- Goodness: in motive and action
- Faithfulness: in the small and hidden
- Gentleness: in leadership and correction
- Self-control: when no one is watching

You cannot manufacture this fruit through effort.
But you also cannot *lack* this fruit if you truly walk with Christ.

The Fruit is the Proof

Jesus warned us:

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matt. 7:19)

That verse doesn’t make the bumper sticker.

But Jesus said it.

He told us that many would come saying “*Lord, Lord,*” and He would say, “*I never knew you.*”

Why?

Because their lives bore no fruit that proved relationship.

There are many people who:

- go to church
- sing songs
- call themselves Christians

...but are angry, bitter, divisive, greedy, and proud.

No fruit. No root.

Why So Many Christians Stay Fruitless

It's not because they're evil.
It's not even always rebellion.
Sometimes... it's neglect. Or fear. Or confusion.

1. Neglect

We don't abide.
We live fast, distracted, self-led lives—and expect Christ's life to shine through. It won't.

2. Fear

We're afraid to change.
We like our control. We like our grudges. We think dying to self is too much.
But Jesus said unless a seed dies, it can't bear fruit.

3. Confusion

We confuse church activity for godliness.
We substitute service for surrender. But fruit grows from intimacy, not busyness.

How Fruit Grows

You don't squeeze fruit out of a branch.
The branch abides. The vine produces.

In the same way:

- Fruit is not forced
- It is not faked
- It is not polished for Instagram

It grows slowly —
—In the dirt of everyday life
—In the trials
—In the mundane
—In the pain

You love your child when they scream.
You're gentle when your spouse is sharp.
You remain faithful when no one claps.

That's fruit.

God is Patient—but He Inspects the Tree

In Luke 13, Jesus tells a parable about a fruitless fig tree.
The master comes looking for fruit—year after year.
None.

“Cut it down,” he says. “Why should it use up the soil?”

But the gardener pleads:

“Give it one more year. Let me dig around it and fertilize it...”

That's grace.

But grace has an expiration date for the fruitless.

God is not mocked.

If His Spirit truly lives in you, your life must begin to change. Not instantly.
But undeniably.

Are You Seeing Fruit?

Don't just ask:

- *Do I feel saved?*
- *Do I go to church?*

- *Did I say a prayer once?*

Ask instead:

- *Am I more patient than I was last year?*
- *Am I kinder to my family?*
- *Do I choose peace when anger is easier?*
- *Do I forgive faster?*

If not, stop.

Don't double down on effort.

Get quiet. Get honest.

Ask: *Have I really been abiding?*

Abide—and Fruit Will Come

Jesus doesn't say, "Try harder."

He says, "*Remain in Me.*"

Abide. Stay close. Don't wander.

Stay in His Word.

Talk to Him.

Obey His commands, even when they cut across your will.

And the fruit *will* come.

Not always flashy.

Not always fast.

But it will come.

Final Thought: You Were Made for This

You were not saved just to escape hell.

You were saved to bear fruit.

Jesus said:

“This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.” (John 15:8)

The fruit isn’t just for you.

It’s for those around you—your family, your coworkers, your church, the broken world.

They will see the fruit. And through it, they will see Him.

Prayer

Lord, I don’t want to be a barren tree.

I want the world to taste Your Spirit in me—love, joy, peace, patience...

Forgive where I’ve been lazy or afraid.

Help me to abide.

And bear fruit in me, not for my glory, but Yours.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Chapter 2: Love at Home

“If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” – 1 Timothy 3:5

We often talk about “ministry” as something that happens *out there*.
In church buildings. On mission trips. In serving the poor.

But if love doesn’t live at home, it doesn’t live at all.

Home is where the reality of our faith is revealed.
It’s the first, hardest, and most honest test of love.

Jesus didn’t say, *“They will know you are My disciples by your doctrine.”*
He said, *“By your love.”*

The People Closest to Us See the Truth

Strangers might see your best.
The world might hear your words.
But your spouse, your children, your siblings—
—they see the real you.

They see what happens when you're tired.
When you’re wrong.
When you don’t get your way.

If the people in your house don’t see the fruit of the Spirit,
then the tree may be sick.

Love as a Husband or Wife

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25)

That's the bar.
Not comfort. Not chemistry.
Christ.

Jesus laid down His life for His bride.
So must husbands.

- Love means dying to your preferences
- Taking responsibility
- Speaking gently
- Protecting emotionally and spiritually
- Leading with humility

And wives?

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord...” (Ephesians 5:22)

Not as a doormat—but as a picture of trust and honor
—of strength under guidance
—of unity, not silence

This isn't a power game.
It's a love story.
And the world is watching how we live it out.

Love as a Parent

God doesn't want perfect parents.
But He does want faithful ones.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4)

Discipline and instruction—yes.
But without provoking.

Without hypocrisy.

Without crushing their spirit.

Your children are not just your responsibility.

They are your **assignment**.

- You model what a Father looks like
- You shape their view of truth and grace
- You teach them whether faith is real or just Sunday performance

They may forget your lectures.

But they will not forget your example.

Love as a Child or Sibling

Children are not excused from love.

Nor are siblings.

“Honor your father and mother...” (Exodus 20:12)

Honor means more than obedience.

It means respect. Gratitude. Care.

Even when your parents are flawed.

“Whoever does not provide for their relatives... has denied the faith.” (1 Timothy 5:8)

And siblings?

—Be kind.

—Forgive quickly.

—Celebrate, don't compete.

—Share, don't hoard.

The home should be a practice ground for heaven.

When the Home is Broken

Not every home has two parents.
Not every marriage is whole.
Not every child walks in obedience.
Not every sibling relationship is peaceful.

But God still calls us to love.

Love doesn't mean enabling abuse.
Love doesn't mean pretending everything's fine.

But love **does** mean:

- Praying for enemies, even within the household
- Forgiving what can be forgiven
- Reaching out first
- Not repaying evil for evil
- Keeping your own heart from hardening

Sometimes love in the home is the hardest kind.
But that's why it matters most.

Why the Enemy Attacks the Family

Satan hates the family.
Always has.
Because family reflects God's design.

- A Father who loves
- A Son who obeys
- A Bride who waits
- Children who receive
- Unity through sacrifice

So he sows division.
Busyness. Resentment. Distraction. Pride.

When a family walks in love, it declares to the world: *God is real*.
No wonder the enemy aims his arrows here.

The Home Is a Ministry

Your dinner table may be more holy than your pulpit.
Your forgiveness may preach louder than your sermons.
Your patience with your toddler may honor God more than a thousand Bible studies.

Love isn't loud.
It's faithful.

And if it doesn't work at home—
it doesn't work at all.

Ask the Hard Questions

- Do I speak to my family with the same gentleness I show strangers?
- Do I serve my spouse like Christ serves me?
- Do I listen more than I lecture?
- Do I apologize quickly—or defend my pride?
- Do I practice the fruit of the Spirit in the places where it's hardest?

Be honest.
Be brave.
You can't change the past.
But you can obey today.

Don't Miss the First Assignment

You can't claim to love God and neglect the people under your roof.

You can't ignore your children and then teach Sunday school.

You can't belittle your spouse and then raise your hands in worship.

God sees.

And He cares.

"Anyone who does not provide for his household has denied the faith."

"Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way..."

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children..."

This is not extra credit.

This is the foundation.

Final Thought: Let Love Begin Here

The greatest revival may begin in your living room.

Not on a stage. Not in a stadium.

But in how you love your spouse.

In how you pray with your kids.

In how you say "I was wrong."

God is looking for homes that reflect heaven.

Will yours be one of them?

Prayer

Father, forgive me where I've failed to love at home.

Heal what's broken.

Give me patience, kindness, and wisdom.

Let my first ministry be the people You've already given me.

And let love begin in me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 3: Love Serves the Least

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for Me.” – Matthew 25:40

Most Christians agree that love is important.
We love our families. We love our churches. We love Jesus.

But Jesus says love isn’t proven by who you love.
It’s proven by *who you serve*.

And in one of His most sobering teachings, He draws a line—
between sheep and goats,
between the faithful and the false,
between those who *said* they loved Him and those who really did.

That line was drawn...
not by belief,
not by prayer,
but by **action toward the least**.

Who Are “The Least of These”?

Jesus made it painfully clear:

- The hungry
- The thirsty
- The stranger
- The naked
- The sick
- The prisoner

Not just the spiritually lost.
Not just the theologically confused.
But the *physically needy*.

These are the ones He identifies with—

“Whatever you did for them, you did for Me.”

Ignore them, and you’ve ignored Christ Himself.

That’s not poetry. That’s prophecy.

Why We Avoid the Least

We don’t hate the least.

We just... don’t see them.

Or if we do, we quickly explain why they don’t count.

- *They made their choices*
- *They might be scamming*
- *I give at church*
- *I’m too busy*
- *It’s not safe*

We have a thousand reasons.

And one big lie behind them all:

That Jesus will understand.

But Jesus Says: I Was That Person

“I was hungry... and you gave Me nothing.”

“I was a stranger... and you did not invite Me in.”

“I was in prison... and you didn’t visit.”

This is what the King will say.

Not to the obviously wicked.

But to those who *thought* they were His.

They are shocked.

“When did we see You...?”

And that’s the problem.

They looked for a *glorious* Jesus
—but didn’t see Him in the poor man
—the refugee
—the woman in the hospital bed
—the addict behind bars

Love Doesn’t Wait for Comfort

We tend to serve when it’s:

- Scheduled
- Safe
- Convenient

But Jesus served:

- On His way somewhere
- When tired
- When interrupted
- When it cost Him everything

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...” (Mark 10:45)

We are not above our Master.

Practical Love is Real Love

1 John 3:17 says it plainly:

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother in need but has no pity... how can the love of God be in that person?”

Love that never moves the wallet,
never rearranges the calendar,

never enters the mess —
is not biblical love.

You don't have to fix the world.
But you must respond when God puts *one* need in front of you.

What Does It Look Like?

- Visiting a nursing home
- Bringing groceries to a family in crisis
- Supporting a missionary in a hard place
- Writing a letter to someone in prison
- Opening your home to a foster child
- Befriending the immigrant no one speaks to
- Giving up a meal to feed someone else

It might be awkward.
It might be inconvenient.
It might not feel spiritual.

But it might be Jesus.

But What About the Gospel?

We must never forget:
Serving the least is not a substitute for the Gospel.
But it is a doorway to it.

- Jesus healed *and* preached
- He fed the hungry *and* called for repentance
- He touched lepers *and* told them to sin no more

If your love serves but never speaks—speak.
If your love speaks but never serves—serve.

Let no one say of us: *“They preached love but walked past need.”*

Excuses Are Not Enough

Jesus didn’t say, *“I know your heart.”*
He said, *“I know your fruit.”*

And on that Day, our excuses will fall like dust.

- *“I was too busy.”*
- *“I didn’t know where to start.”*
- *“I meant to.”*
- *“I gave at the office.”*

All will seem so small—
compared to the face of the King,
saying, *“I was there. And you walked past Me.”*

Love Goes Low

To serve the least is to kneel.

It is to humble yourself,
to share in pain you didn’t cause,
to give to those who may never thank you,
to love people who can do nothing for you.

That’s the love of Jesus.

“Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor...” (2 Cor. 8:9)

So we do the same.

Final Thought: He's Watching

God doesn't measure your love by what you *feel*.
He measures it by what you *do*.

He sees:

- The quiet sacrifice
- The awkward kindness
- The late-night delivery
- The extra coat given
- The visit made when no one else showed up

Jesus said:

"You did it for Me."

That is what we live for.

Prayer

Lord, I confess I've often passed by the ones You told me to love.

Open my eyes.

Break my routines.

Teach me to serve not for show, but for You.

Let me see Your face in the least.

And let my life say: *"I loved You."*

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 4: Love in the Shadows

“Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” – Matthew 6:4

Not all love is public.

Not all obedience is visible.

Some of the most powerful acts of faith happen where no one sees but God.

In a world of performance and applause, this is easy to forget.

But love that is real does not crave recognition.

It flourishes in secret.

“When you give... don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”

“When you pray... go into your room and shut the door.”

“When you fast... don’t show it.” (Matthew 6)

Jesus didn’t just warn against hypocrisy.

He called us to a deeper love—a **hidden love**, born not of attention, but of devotion.

Love that Doesn’t Post About It

We live in a world addicted to being seen.

We take photos of service.

We announce our good deeds.

We even turn compassion into content.

But love that demands to be noticed is not love—it’s marketing.

Real love whispers, *“This is for Him.”*

Not for likes.

Not for credit.

Not for legacy.

For Him.

Why the Hidden Life Matters

Because it reveals who you are when the stage is gone.

- Do you pray when no one hears?
- Do you give when no one thanks you?
- Do you show up when it won't be remembered?

Jesus sees.

He weighs motives.

He honors the secret place.

Examples of Shadow Love

- A mother who prays over her children while they sleep
- A man who anonymously pays a neighbor's rent
- A woman who brings meals to the sick and tells no one
- A teen who fasts and never speaks of it
- An employee who refuses to gossip, even when it costs them influence

None of these people will be honored in this world.

But Heaven knows their names.

Jesus Practiced What He Preached

Often, Jesus withdrew.

He left the crowds.

He slipped away to pray.

He healed people and told them not to tell anyone.

He avoided premature fame.

Even His greatest act—His death on the cross—was not loud or proud.
It was shameful. Bloody. Hidden from the powerful.
And it changed the world.

The Danger of Public Religion

Jesus had harsh words for those who loved the spotlight.

“They do all their deeds to be seen by others...”

“They love the place of honor...”

“They make their faces gloomy to show they are fasting...” (Matthew 23, Matthew 6)

He doesn’t just dislike performative faith.
He condemns it.

Why?

Because it lies.

It presents a holy image—while the heart is craving praise.

Jesus wants truth in the inward parts. (Psalm 51:6)

He wants the kind of love that would still obey if no one ever knew.

Serving in the Background

Some of the greatest kingdom work is done by people no one sees.

- Janitors who pray as they clean
- Volunteers who stack chairs after the crowd leaves
- Widows who intercede daily
- Single parents who read Bible stories after a 12-hour shift
- The elderly who write notes of encouragement to young believers

These lives are not wasted.
They are **poured out**.

And the Father sees every drop.

God Sees in Secret

Jesus repeated this again and again in Matthew 6:

“Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

He sees.

Not just what you do—but why you do it.
Not just your gifts—but your motive.
Not just your sacrifice—but your silence.

God sees the love that no one claps for.
And He will reward it.

Don’t Despise the Hidden Place

You may never preach a sermon.
You may never be known.
You may never be invited, applauded, or followed.

But if you love in the shadows—
God sees.

And in the end, it’s His voice that matters:

“Well done, good and faithful servant...”

Not *“Well known.”*
Not *“Well followed.”*
But *well done*.

Final Thought: Stay Hidden if That's Where You Bear Fruit

Some lights shine far.
Some lights shine near.

Some shine from platforms.
Others from prayer closets.

What matters is not how far your light reaches,
but whether it points to Christ.

And sometimes, the most faithful love
is the kind no one ever sees.

Prayer

Father, help me to love when no one is looking.
Let me give without being thanked.
Let me serve without being seen.
Let me pray without needing credit.
Teach me to value the secret place—because You are there.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 5: Love Gives the First and Best

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce.” – Proverbs 3:9

Love always gives.

It doesn't hoard.

It doesn't wait until there's extra.

It gives from the top—because God is worthy.

God didn't give us His leftovers.

He gave His first and best:

“He did not spare His own Son...” (Romans 8:32)

So if we claim to love Him,

then our lives—our time, our money, our attention—should say the same.

What You Give Reveals Who You Love

You can say what you believe.

You can sing worship songs.

You can even preach.

But Jesus watched people drop coins into a temple box and made it clear:

Giving reveals the heart.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

Where you put your money—your calendar, your energy—shows who your real Master is.

Firstfruits, Not Leftovers

From the beginning, God commanded His people to give the **firstfruits**.

Not what was left.
Not what they didn't need.
The first.

Because giving isn't about funding heaven.
It's about *honoring God*.

It says:
—“You are my Provider.”
—“You are my priority.”
—“You are worthy of the best I have.”

Cain gave an offering. Abel gave the best.
One was accepted. One was not.

The difference wasn't the amount.
It was the **heart behind it**.

Tithing Is a Heart Issue

Tithing is not about legalism.
It's about love.

Many Christians argue, “*We're not under the Law anymore.*”
True.
But love always goes further than law.

Jesus didn't come to lower the standard—He raised it.
He didn't say, “Give less.”
He said, “Give everything.”

“*Anyone who does not renounce all he has cannot be My disciple.*” (Luke 14:33)

The tenth was just the floor.
Love gives the ceiling.

Time, Talent, and Treasure

Giving isn't just about money.

It's about:

- **Time:** Do I give God the best part of my day—or the scraps?
- **Talent:** Am I using my skills to build the Kingdom—or just my career?
- **Treasure:** Do I live with open hands—or tight fists?

If love doesn't touch all three,
then it hasn't reached the roots.

What Love Looks Like in Practice

- Waking early to pray before the demands of the day
- Serving faithfully in a role no one sees
- Budgeting to give—before budgeting for vacation
- Saying yes to a need even when it stretches your comfort
- Using your weekend to help someone move, feed the hungry, or build up the church

Love always costs.
But it never regrets the cost.

The Rich Young Ruler's Mistake

He followed the rules.
He believed in God.
He was moral and upright.

But when Jesus said, “*Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor...*”
He walked away sad.

Why?

Because he didn’t love Jesus.
He loved his stuff.

That’s the line Jesus draws:
You can’t serve two masters.

God Gives Seed to the Sower

Some people say, “*I would give more if I had more.*”
But God gives *more* to those who *sow*.

“He who supplies seed to the sower... will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.” (2 Cor. 9:10)

You don’t need abundance to be generous.
You need trust.

The widow gave two coins.
Jesus said she gave more than anyone.

Because she gave from the heart—
and not from her surplus.

He Gave You Everything—What Will You Give Back?

All that we have is already His.

- The paycheck
- The breath in your lungs

- The house
- The skills
- The family
- The time

We are stewards, not owners.

And stewards will be asked:

“What did you do with what I gave you?”

Final Thought: Give Like You Love Him

God doesn't need your money.

He wants your heart.

But if your heart is His,
then your life will show it—
in what you give,
how you give,
and why you give.

Don't wait until it's easy.

Start now.

Love gives the first.

Love gives the best.

Because love remembers who gave first.

Prayer

Father, I confess I have often given You my leftovers.

I've held tightly to what was never mine.

But I want to love You with my whole life.

Teach me to give joyfully, sacrificially, and faithfully.

You gave everything for me—help me to respond in kind.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 6: Love at Work

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.” – Colossians 3:23

For many Christians, work feels disconnected from faith.
Monday through Friday is a job.
Sunday is for God.

But love doesn’t clock in and out.
It doesn’t vanish when we walk into the office, start a shift, or sit behind a screen.

If Christ lives in you, He goes with you—to work.

The workplace is not separate from discipleship.
It’s where love proves itself:
—in honesty
—in humility
—in excellence
—in submission
—in leadership
—in integrity

The Command Is Clear

Paul writes to bondservants—people with no status, no rights:

“Obey... not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.” (Col. 3:22)

He goes on to say:

“It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” (v.24)

If Paul can say this to servants—how much more to free men and women in a modern workplace?

We don't work for a paycheck.

We don't work for applause.

We work for the Lord.

Love as an Employee

Love shows up in how we work.

- Showing up on time
- Doing more than required
- Refusing to gossip
- Honoring authority, even when it's flawed
- Owning mistakes instead of blaming others
- Serving coworkers without being asked
- Guarding our integrity when no one's watching

You don't need a Bible on your desk to witness.

You need a life that reflects Jesus.

“Aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands...” (1 Thess. 4:11)

That's not just advice. That's love.

Love as a Boss or Employer

Scripture doesn't let leaders off the hook.

“Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing you also have a Master in heaven.” (Col. 4:1)

If you're in authority—your love is tested even more.

- Are you just?
- Do you pay fairly?
- Do you listen well?
- Do you give dignity to those under you?
- Do you build up or use up?
- Do you reflect the humility of Christ—or the pride of Pharaoh?

Your business may be successful.

But if your people suffer under your hand, God will call it failure.

Love leads like Christ—who washes feet.

Work Isn't Just a Job—it's a Witness

The world expects Christians to be nice.

But it doesn't expect them to be excellent. Or faithful. Or meek under pressure.

That's where love stands out.

When others:

- Cut corners
- Lie to get ahead
- Mock authority
- Slack off
- Play politics

And you:

- Stay honest
- Work hard
- Speak well
- Keep your peace
- Refuse the shortcut

People notice.

And some will ask *why*.

That's your moment.

You May Be the Only Bible They Read

Not every job is glamorous.

Not every boss is kind.

Not every coworker is easy.

But Jesus didn't call us to ideal situations.

He called us to faithfulness.

Even in the warehouse.

Even in the break room.

Even under a bad manager.

Your quiet, steady, sacrificial love may be the only sermon someone ever hears.

And God sees it.

Beware of Compromise

It's easy to justify:

- "Everyone fudges numbers..."

- “It’s just a little dishonesty...”
- “I need to keep my job...”
- “No one will know...”

But love honors God above profit.

Love walks away when sin becomes the price of success.

If your work requires you to disobey Christ,
then the job has become your master.

And you can’t serve two.

Don’t Waste the Workday

Some believers spend all their energy looking for a “real” ministry—
while ignoring the mission field they walk into every morning.

God may not call you to a pulpit.

But He’s placed you at a desk, in a truck, on a Zoom call, or in a classroom.

That’s your field.

Don’t just endure it.

Don’t just survive it.

Love there.

Final Thought: Work as Worship

Work is not a curse.

It was part of creation before the fall.

It was holy, purposeful, and good.

And now, through Christ, it can be worship again.

Whether you run a company or clean a floor,
whether you teach students or change diapers,
whether you lead or follow —

Work as unto the Lord.

With love.

With excellence.

With humility.

Because the real Boss... is watching.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the work You've given me.

Forgive where I've grumbled, slacked off, or compromised.

Teach me to work with love—quiet, steady, holy love.

Let my coworkers see You in how I serve.

Let me honor You in every task.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 7: Love Stewarded

“To whom much is given, much will be required.” – Luke 12:48

God has entrusted you with something.
Maybe many things.

Time.
Gifts.
Opportunities.
Resources.
Relationships.
A testimony.

You may think, *“I don’t have much.”*
But if you are in Christ, you are rich in Kingdom currency.

And Jesus is not asking what you’ve been given.
He’s asking what you’ve done with it.

The Parable That Should Shake Us

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells a story of a master who goes away.
He gives three servants bags of gold—called “talents.”

To one he gives five.
To another, two.
To the last, one.

The first two invest. Multiply. Risk.
They are praised:

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

But the third?
He buries it.

Keeps it safe.

Protects what was given, but does nothing with it.

He is rebuked—*not for stealing, not for squandering, but for doing nothing.*

“You wicked and lazy servant.”

God Hates Waste

Not waste as the world defines it—

But waste of **potential**.

Of purpose.

Of entrusted power.

God gives gifts for a reason.

And love *stewards them well*.

If love is real, it doesn't bury the gift.

It multiplies it.

What Has God Given You?

This is not about comparing yourself to others.

One had five talents.

One had two.

The issue wasn't the amount.

It was faithfulness.

Ask:

- What has He entrusted to me?
- What skills, passions, or burdens has He placed in my hands?
- Who listens when I speak?
- What needs can I meet?

- What doors has He opened?

You are not empty-handed.
And God expects a return.

The Danger of Playing It Safe

The third servant was afraid.
So he did nothing.

That's many believers.

- Afraid to fail
- Afraid to look foolish
- Afraid of discomfort
- Afraid of being wrong

But safety is not faith.
Comfort is not obedience.

The cross was not safe.
Jesus didn't die so we could bury grace in a napkin.

Your Life Is Not Yours

You were bought with a price. (1 Cor. 6:20)
That means every part of you—your time, your talents, your influence—is
now Kingdom property.

You are not an owner.
You are a steward.

And one day, the Master will return.
The books will be opened.
And the question will be asked:

“What did you do with what I gave you?”

Excuses Will Not Be Enough

- *“I didn’t have time.”*
- *“I wasn’t as talented as them.”*
- *“I was waiting for a better season.”*
- *“I was afraid.”*

All will sound hollow when the King stands before us.
He is not harsh.
But He is holy.
And He means what He says.

Faithfulness is Not Flashy

Don’t confuse fruitfulness with fame.
You don’t need a platform to be obedient.

- Writing encouragements no one sees
- Serving a single family faithfully
- Praying behind the scenes
- Leading one quiet Bible study
- Using your hands for someone else’s burden

This is Kingdom work.
And it counts.

Love Takes Responsibility

The world trains us to avoid responsibility.

Blame others.

Blame your past.

Blame your limits.

But love steps up.

It says:

—“I will answer for what’s in my hands.”

—“I will not bury it.”

—“I will not waste the chance.”

Even if no one else sees.

Even if it’s hard.

Even if I’m afraid.

Final Thought: There’s Still Time

You might think: “*I’ve wasted years.*”

But the Lord restores lost time.

If you’re breathing, you can still bear fruit.

Still invest.

Still obey.

Still pour out what He’s put in.

But don’t wait.

The Master is coming.

And when He does—let Him find you faithful.

Prayer

Lord, I confess I've buried gifts You gave me.
Out of fear. Out of laziness. Out of distraction.
But I want to change.
Show me what You've entrusted to me.
Teach me to steward it with joy and courage.
Let me live like one who loves You—for real.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 8: Love Bears Burdens

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” – Galatians 6:2

Love is not proven by how we act when life is easy.
It’s proven by what we do when someone else is struggling—
and we choose to *step under their weight*.

The church is not meant to be a crowd of spectators.
It is meant to be a family.
And families carry each other.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12:15)

You cannot do that from a distance.
You must get close.
You must feel what they feel.
You must bear their burden.

What Is a Burden?

Burdens come in all forms:

- Grief
- Temptation
- Poverty
- Illness
- Depression
- Loneliness

- Addiction
- Family brokenness
- Financial disaster
- Fear of the future
- Shame from the past

Some burdens are visible.
Some are deeply hidden.

But all of them crush people—if carried alone.

Love says: *“Let me walk with you.”*

Jesus Bore Our Burden

The law of Christ is not vague.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...”
(Matt. 11:28)

He didn’t shout from afar.
He didn’t lecture the weary.
He got down in the dirt.
He carried the cross *for us*.

If that’s how Jesus loved,
then that’s how His people must love.

This Is Not Optional

Galatians 6:2 doesn’t say “Consider bearing burdens...”
It says *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

This is how the command of love is fulfilled.

You can memorize Scripture.

You can serve in church.

But if you walk past your hurting brother or sister,
you have missed the very heart of Christ.

Why We Avoid Burdens

- **They're messy.**
It's easier to give advice than to sit in someone's pain.
- **They take time.**
Burdens don't lift in an afternoon.
- **They cost us.**
Emotionally, physically, financially.
- **We feel inadequate.**
"What if I can't fix it?"

But love doesn't wait to feel ready.

It just shows up.

You don't need all the answers.

You just need a willing heart.

Ways to Bear a Burden

- Listening—without trying to fix
- Weeping—without rushing their healing
- Paying a bill when they can't
- Babysitting for a grieving parent
- Praying with them, not just for them
- Sitting in silence so they're not alone

- Being consistent after others move on

Burdens rarely need brilliant solutions.
They need faithful presence.

Pride Refuses to Carry

Sometimes we don't bear burdens because we're too proud.

We think:

- *"That's their fault."*
- *"They should know better."*
- *"They're not my responsibility."*

But love stoops low.
It remembers that Jesus bore ours.

He didn't wait until we had cleaned up our act.
He didn't say, *"You got yourself into this."*

He carried us while we were still sinners.
So now, we do the same.

Love Also Lets Others Help

Some reading this aren't avoiding burdens.
You're drowning under one—and refusing help.

That's not humility.
That's pride.

You are part of the body.
You weren't meant to suffer in silence.

Let the Church be the Church.
Ask for help.
Let someone sit with you.
Let someone carry part of what's crushing you.

That's not weakness.
That's obedience.

Final Thought: The Church Is a Burden-Bearing People

When the world looks at the Church,
they should see something radically different:

- People who don't let others suffer alone
- People who stay after the funeral
- People who show up after everyone else leaves
- People who bear burdens without complaint—because they remember how Christ bore theirs

This is love.
This is Christ.
This is what He meant when He said, *“Love one another as I have loved you.”*

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to the burdens around me.
Break my pride. Interrupt my comfort.
Teach me to carry what isn't mine—because You carried what was mine.
Let my love look like You.
And when I am crushed, give me the humility to let others help.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 9: Love Isn't Optional

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong...” – 1 Corinthians 13:1

There is a kind of Christianity that sings, prays, studies, even serves—but does not love.

It shows up to church.
It agrees with doctrine.
It says the right words.

But when Jesus looks at it,
He does not see Himself.

The Warning We Don't Want to Hear

Jesus said:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven...”

“Many will say... ‘Did we not prophesy in Your name?’”

“..And I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you.’” (Matt. 7:21–23)

These were religious people.
Active people.
Impressive people.

But they lacked one thing: **relationship**.
And love is the proof of that relationship.

Love Is the Evidence of Faith

“By this all people will know that you are My disciples—if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

Not: *if you believe the right things.*

Not: *if you attend the right church.*

Not: *if you post the right verses.*

If you love.

You Can't Claim to Love Jesus and Withhold Love from Others

John says it flat out:

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar." (1 John 4:20)

That's not strong language.

That's God's language.

There is no such thing as a loving Christian
who does not love people.

Not just "people like me."

Not just "people who treat me well."

Not just "people I understand."

All people.

Even enemies.

Even the least.

Even the ones who cost you something.

Love Isn't a Spiritual Add-On

It's not the optional topping to your faith.

It is the center.

"The greatest of these is love."

"Let all that you do be done in love."

"Without love, I gain nothing."

Love is not a feeling.
It's not passivity.
It's not "niceness."

It is active, costly, obedient loyalty to Christ—*expressed in how we treat others.*

No Love = No Light

1 John 2:9–10 says:

"Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."

You can go to church every week and still live in darkness.
You can memorize scripture and still not know the God who wrote it.

You can say, *"I believe in Jesus,"* and live as if He never loved you—
by refusing to love others.

Love Doesn't Excuse Sin—It Looks Like Jesus

Some think love means:

- Tolerating sin
- Approving of everything
- Never confronting anyone

That's not love.
That's cowardice.

Jesus loved sinners—and told them to leave their sin.
Jesus welcomed the broken—but called them to holiness.

True love *tells the truth*—and *sticks around to help carry the cost.*

We Don't Get to Choose Who We Love

Jesus said:

“Love your enemies... do good to those who hate you.” (Luke 6:27)

That's not hyperbole.
That's the Kingdom.

Love is not tested by how you treat your friends.
It's tested by how you treat your enemies.

Anyone can love the lovable.
Only Christ in you can love the ones who hurt you.

You Can't Say You Love Him if You Don't Obey Him

Back to the beginning:

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)

Love is proven in action.
Not emotion.
Not performance.
Obedience.

You don't get to define love.
Jesus already did.

Final Thought: Love Is the Final Exam

When you stand before God,
He will not ask how much you knew.
He will not ask how well you performed.

He will ask:
“Did you love Me?”

“Did you love My people?”

“Did you walk like I walked?”

And your life—your choices, your obedience, your relationships—will answer.

Make sure the answer is yes.

Prayer

Lord, I don't want to be one of those who says, “Lord, Lord,” but doesn't live like You are Lord.

Teach me to love—not just in words, but in action.

Let love be the evidence of Your Spirit in me.

Strip away the performance. Burn away the pride.

Let my faith be real. Let it be known by love.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 10: Love and the Judgment Seat

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...” – 2 Corinthians 5:10

The day is coming.
The day when every knee will bow.
Every tongue confess.
Every soul brought into the open before the Lord.

Not metaphor.

Not poetry.

Reality.

“Each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)

And on that day, love won’t just be a virtue.
It will be the evidence.

Not Judgment for Condemnation—But For Reward

If you are in Christ, your salvation is secure.
Your sins are covered.
Your name is written.

But you *will* stand before Jesus.
And the Gardener who said, *“Give it one more year...”* will now return to inspect the tree.

“What did you do with what I gave you?”

Not to condemn,
but to evaluate.
Not to shame,
but to reveal.

The Fire Will Test the Work

Paul says it plainly in 1 Corinthians 3:12–15:

“...The Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.”

- If it was built with gold, silver, precious stones—it remains.
- If it was built with wood, hay, straw—it burns.
- *“He will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”*

Some will enter eternity
—barely—
with the smell of smoke still on their clothes.
Ashes where fruit could have grown.

Why?
Because they buried what was given.
They used grace as a pass, not a purpose.

What Will That Day Reveal About Your Love?

Did you live for Christ—or for comfort?
Did you obey, or explain away?
Did you forgive, or hold back?
Did you bear fruit—or just leaves?

The fig tree had leaves too.
From a distance, it looked healthy.
But up close—*nothing*.

That’s what the Day will show:
Up close, did your life bear love?

Many Will Be Surprised

Some will expect reward—
but find regret.

They built platforms, not people.
They served their name, not His.
They kept busy for church, but stayed far from Christ.

Jesus warned:

“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord...’”
And He will say, *“I never knew you.”*

It’s not about activity.
It’s about *abiding*.
And abiding produces fruit.

Love Will Be the Standard

Not the kind you define.
Not the kind the world praises.
The kind Jesus modeled.

“If I have all knowledge... but have not love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:2)

He won’t count your:

- Followers
- Church attendance
- Emotional experiences
- Doctrinal precision

He will weigh your love.

And He will ask:

- Did you serve the least?
- Did you obey Me when it hurt?
- Did you forgive as I forgave?
- Did you bear My image to a watching world?

Even Small Acts Will Be Remembered

“If anyone gives even a cup of cold water... he will not lose his reward.”
(Matt. 10:42)

Jesus doesn't overlook the little things.

The quiet gifts.

The unseen sacrifices.

The love that cost but never posted.

You don't need a big life.

Just a faithful one.

There Is Still Time

You are living in your “one more year.”

This is your season of grace.

The Gardener is still digging, still fertilizing, still pleading.

But the Master will return.

Don't live like judgment will never come.

Live like love must grow now.

Final Thought: Live for the “Well Done”

This world rewards the impressive.
Jesus rewards the faithful.

And on that Day—
He will not ask if people knew your name.
He will ask if you bore His.

Let your life say:

“I loved You, Lord. And I showed it.”

Prayer

Jesus, I know I will stand before You one day.
Not condemned, but accountable.
And I want to be found faithful.
Teach me to build with love.
Let my life show fruit, not just leaves.
Don't let me waste this “one more year.”
And when I see You face to face, let me hear the words:
“Well done.”
In Your name, Amen.

Chapter 11: Return to Love

“Sir, leave it alone for one more year...” – Luke 13:8

You may feel the weight by now.
The conviction. The pressure.
You may even feel the guilt you didn’t want—
—but needed.

Good.
Not because guilt is the goal,
but because it means your heart is still alive.

And here’s the truth:

You are the fig tree.
And this is your “one more year.”

The King Is Looking for Fruit

Jesus said:

*“A man had a fig tree... and he came looking for fruit and found none.”
(Luke 13:6)*

God is not being unfair.
He is the planter. The Provider. The One who waters and waits.

But when He comes looking—He expects fruit.
Not perfection.
Not flash.
Just fruit.

And in this story, He finds none.

“Cut it down.”

That is judgment.
Just. Righteous. Deserved.

But then—
grace speaks.

The Voice of Mercy

“Leave it alone for one more year. Let me dig around it and put on fertilizer. If it bears fruit next year—well and good.” (v. 8–9)

That voice is Jesus.
The Gardener. The Intercessor.

The one who says:
“Give them more time.”
“Let Me work in them.”
“Let Me break the soil, enrich the roots, call them back to life.”

You are still breathing today because He said,
“Not yet. Let’s give it one more year.”

This Chapter Is the Fork in the Road

You’ve heard what love looks like.
You’ve read what Jesus expects.
You’ve been reminded what real discipleship costs.

Now you choose.

Will you stay comfortable, religious, fruitless?

Or will you *return to love*—
—the love that obeys, that serves, that gives, that reflects the One who gave everything?

First Love Is Not a Feeling

It's not about emotional highs.

It's about Jesus being your everything again.

"You have abandoned the love you had at first." (Rev. 2:4)

Not *lost*.

Abandoned.

You walked away.

Slowly, subtly, maybe even without noticing.

But now, Jesus says:

"Remember from where you've fallen. Repent. Do the works you did at first."
(Rev. 2:5)

This is not condemnation.

It's invitation.

You Still Have Time. But Not Forever.

The fig tree was given a year.

One.

And no promise of another.

You are being given time today—
—but no guarantee of tomorrow.

This is not manipulative.

It's mercy.

Mercy that speaks honestly.

Mercy that says,

"Your life must change—because your love must be real."

Let This Be the Year

Let this be the year:

- You forgive the person you said you never would
- You start praying again
- You give when it's costly
- You serve where no one sees
- You say "yes" to that call you've ignored
- You give Jesus not just your belief—but your obedience

Let this be the year your tree bears fruit.

Final Thought: This Time Next Year

Twelve months from now, what will your life say?

Will it show:

- Growth?
- Obedience?
- Repentance?
- Love?

Or will it look the same...

...while the roots remain untouched?

The King will return.

He will walk through His vineyard.

He will look at your life.

And He will either say:

“Well done.”

Or:

“Cut it down.”

You choose now what He will say then.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You’ve given me more time. I didn’t deserve it, but You have given it.

Let this be the year I return to my first love.

Dig up my hard heart. Feed me with truth.

Water me with grace and stretch my roots in obedience.

Bear fruit in me—not for my glory, but for Yours.

I don’t want to waste this chance.

Help me to change.

In Your name, Amen.