

First and Second Peter Lesson 4 2Q 2017

Social Relationships

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: "Above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'" (1Peter 4:8 NKJV)

What does this mean? Love covers a multitude of sins? Does it mean:

- cover over
- cover up
- cover for
- To hide
- to erase from memory
- to purge from court documents
- to not hold accountable
- to remit punishment
- to legally pardon

What does it mean love will cover a multitude of sins?

What is sin? What is the problem sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix?

At its root what is sin? Lies and selfishness, which are the opposite of truth and love.

What do lies and selfishness cause or result in? Rebellion—from what? From how God constructed reality to operate.

What does love do to selfishness?

When Jesus loved those who persecuted Him—did their selfishness, their evil, their sin become more difficult or easier to see?

Did Jesus' love for them cover up, cover over, erase, eliminate, hide, or in any other way obscure their sin?

Or did Jesus' love make their sin more easily seen?

When Stephen was being stoned and he responded with love, did his loving response cover over selfishness and sinfulness of his persecutors? Did it make their sin more difficult to see or easier to see?

So, does love hide, obscure, cover over, make sin more difficult to see or make the contrast easier?

Any idea that love erases facts, obscures history, purges record books, is false. Jesus said:

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Lk 8:17

So, what does it mean that love covers a multitude of sins? What does love actually do to sin?

Our memory text from *The Remedy*:

Above everything, love each other completely, because love destroys sinfulness.

When God writes His law on our hearts and minds—what is actually happening?

Is the law written on our hearts the law of love, the design protocol of God's own nature and character? And when this happens, what happens to the motives of selfishness? Are they being purged, erased, destroyed from where? Out of the character! Sinfulness in the soul being destroyed, and what is doing it? Truth and love!

Here are a couple of quotes, what do you think—agree or disagree?

The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? **Obedience--the service and allegiance of love--is the true sign of discipleship.** {SC 60.2}

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." [take away sin, or take away punishment for sin? And from where is sin taken away, the record books or the character? Does He take away the record of sin or the sinfulness itself?] By beholding Him, we may be changed into His image. [Where is the purifying happening? In people!] The promise has been made, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Through disobedience man forfeited holiness, accepting in its place the principles of unrighteousness. [In its place—where? Where is the place from which the principles of holiness were lost and unrighteousness was put? The hearts and minds of people! What metaphor describes the rewriting of God's law into the heart? The cleansing of the sanctuary.] But by breaking the yoke that Satan has fastened upon him, and taking the yoke of Christ, learning of Him His meekness and lowliness, man is created anew. Christ has promised to

write in the heart of every repentant sinner His law, which is holy, just, and good. **He promises to renovate the soul, through the medium of truth. He diffuses His own life through the entire being.** Thus the sinner is born again, and henceforth, in a life of loving service, he is to work out the grand, **ennobling principles** that he can take with him into the heavenly courts. **There is placed upon him a new mould of character,** which the world knows not, but which all must receive who obtain entrance into the courts above. {ST, June 28, 1905 par. 6}

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul... {COL 311.3}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

What does it mean that love covers a multitude of sins? I think it means that love destroys sinfulness out of the hearts and minds of those who trust God!

Read first paragraph, “Peter’s letter also tackles...” How should Christians live with oppressive and corrupt governments?

Should we identify our own selves with the governments of the world? Should we be proud to be a citizen of an earthly government, or should we be proud our citizenship is in heaven?

Is there a difference in being a law abiding, tax-paying, good neighbor and citizen, and identifying yourself with your nation?

SUNDAY

The lesson is about the relationship between church and state.

The lesson points out that Bible writers encouraged the Christians to obey the laws of the human governments, thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “In some cases, it’s pretty obvious...” The lesson is suggesting that when the case arises in which the choice is either obey the laws of human governments or the laws of God, we must choose the laws of God.

Do you agree?

Is this always clear or are there many areas of gray and personal interpretation? Is this one of those areas where “every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind?”

Consider the following possibilities:

- God’s command: Thou shall not kill—what about:
 - A police officer carrying a weapon, and using it to kill a criminal?
 - A soldier in war? Desmond Doss took a particular stand on that one, do all Christians come to the same conclusion as Desmond?
 - Participating in executing a convicted criminal? The medical profession has found it unethical for physicians to participate in executing people, should Christians have less standards than doctors?
 - Euthanasia? Should we assist people with terminal conditions in ending their own lives?
 - Abortion—while many Christians believe abortion is murder, some Christians do not believe abortion is murder—do we allow each person to be persuaded in their own mind, or do we seek to force our beliefs on others?
- Marriage—God’s design in Eden was one man and one woman—what about:
 - polygamy? Do we find Bible writers admonishing an end to polygamy?
 - What of more modern societies?
 - What about same sex marriages—should we obey the laws of the land and leave people free to engage in same sex marriage, or should we disobey the law and seek to obstruct them?
- Slavery—God’s design is for human freedom
 - Did Bible writers advise slaves to leave their masters?
 - In the OT God built into the Hebrew system the legal freeing of slaves every 49 years. But why didn’t God just outlaw slavery rather than limiting how long one could be a slave? Do we ever find Bible directions that outlaw slavery?
 - **FRIDAY’s** lesson read the first paragraph, “Ellen G. White advocated...”
 - Did the Bible writers take the same position that EGW took on slavery?
 - Was EGW right or wrong in her position? I
 - s EGW to be taken over the Bible?
 - Why the difference in counsel between EGW and the Bible on the issue of slavery?
 - Was there some aspect of culture that was different? What?
 - If all slaves were set free in first century Rome, what would have been a likely result? Greater order, or disorder, anarchy, crime, starvation, etc. etc. Would the condition of many of the slaves been worse in that day had they suddenly all been set free?

- What would have happened to the gospel and the message of Christ had the Christians began advocating for changes in social order rather than changes in the hearts of people?
- Was Christianity well established in the 19th century, but just emerging in the first? Does this play a role in the different attitude?

What are your thoughts on the relationship between the church and state?

Do you think the church can achieve God's purposes by working through the state institutions? Why or why not?

What methods do states always use? They always use coercion. Can God achieve His goal of changing hearts by the use of coercion? No! Coercion will never work to transform hearts—only love truth in freedom!

Can we run sinful human governments with God's methods—why or why not?

What are God's methods? Truth, love and freedom—which have their primary impact where? And what do they result in? They have their impact on the heart to win to trust and transform the person back to God's design for life. Thus God's methods change people—putting them into harmony with God so they can live in His unveiled presence.

Will truth, love, freedom, without coercive pressure, work in a world populated by people who have rejected truth, who have solidified their hearts in selfishness and are operating on fear and survival mode? Why or why not?

What happens in a sinful world without coercive law enforcement? When law enforcement breaks down—the aftermath of Katrina—what happened? Why does this happen?

So, is the Bible saying that God permits earthly governments to arise in order to provide restraint on evil humans who have rejected the principles of love, truth and freedom, in order to create order and atmospheres where the gospel can be shared and people set free from sinfulness?

Does this mean that God endorses the governments of the earth?

TUESDAY

Read 1Peter 3:1-7:

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.³ Your beauty should not come from outward

adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands,⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

The lesson asks "How is what is said relevant to marriage in today's society?"

Do we ever hear, in Christianity, about wives submitting to their husbands? What does this mean?

What is Peter's focus here? Is Peter's concern to establish hierarchical command structure within the family? Is Peter's concern to define lines of authority? In Peter's day, was there already an accepted hierarchy within families—pagan, Jew and Christian?

What was the accepted hierarchy across all groups in Peter's day? Husband's ruled in their homes—wives were subservient.

So, is Peter establishing or in any other way commenting about the lines of authority within the home, or is Peter's focus on something entirely different?

What is Peter's focus? Is it not on the salvation of husband and wife? Is it not on the healing of the inner persons from sinfulness and bringing both members to conversion, which leads both to experience the marriage relationship as God originally intended, mutual other-centered love and self-sacrifice!

From *The Remedy*:

In the same way, wives, by your conduct, actively seek to reveal God's true character to your husbands, so that even if they don't believe the Scriptures, they may be won over by your humble, loving service²when they see genuine, selfless love in action.³The beauty that emanates from God cannot be revealed in outward trappings such as hairstyle, jewelry or designer clothes, so don't get tricked into making your external appearance your main concern.⁴Instead, real, godly beauty is found in a heart, mind and character that has been healed to be like Christ's—gentle and loving—and is of the highest worth in God's sight.⁵This is how the holy women of the past, who trusted God, made themselves beautiful: they lovingly sought the godly best for their husbands,⁶like Sarah, who graciously supported Abraham and called him "my hero and leader." You are truly heirs of Sarah if you give of yourself in love to build up your husband, and not give into fear and selfishness.

⁷If you are a husband, then be sure to always consider the needs of your wife and treat her with love, sacrificing yourselves for her good. Respect her as the weaker partner, but remember her equality to you as an heir of God's gracious gift of life. Do this so that you may experience the unity of love, and nothing will then interfere with your conversations with God.

Is this how you have most commonly heard Peter's words? What has prevented this focus from coming to the forefront? Could it be the acceptance of the imposed law lens with its focus on rules, rather than understanding God's design?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Paul addresses some..." What does it mean rulers are appointed by God? Does it mean that God chooses every ruler?

Was Nero chosen by God? Was Hitler chosen by God? When the little horn power arises and wars against God and against God's people, is God the one who set up that power? Or does the Bible say that this power gets its authority from the dragon? So did God set up this little horn power?

Even in ancient Israel, were all kings set up by God?

But Israel has rejected what is good;
an enemy will pursue him.

⁴ They set up kings without my consent;
they choose princes without my approval.
With their silver and gold
they make idols for themselves
to their own destruction. Hosea 8:3,4

Even in ancient Israel God did not set up all kings.

So, does God appoint all rulers or set up all governors or governments? No!

Then how do they get into power? What is God's role? God permits people to set up their governments, under the umbrella of His rule, which is liberty, and then reap the consequences.

The closing years of the ill-fated kingdom of Israel were marked with violence and bloodshed such as had never been witnessed even in the worst periods of strife and unrest under the house of Ahab. For two centuries and more the rulers of **the ten tribes had been sowing the wind; now they were reaping the whirlwind**. King after king was assassinated to make way for others ambitious to rule. "They have set up kings," the Lord declared of these godless usurpers, "but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." Hosea 8:4. **Every principle of justice was set aside;** those who should have stood before the nations of earth as the

depositaries of divine grace, "dealt treacherously against the Lord" and with one another.
Hosea 5:7. {PK 279.1}

Do we do God a disservice by teaching that all kingdoms are set up by God?

What is the Christian response to rulers, governments that operate out of harmony with God's principles?

Should the church use its energy to try and reform governments?

Which government abused human rights more—today's US government or Rome at the time of Christ and the first century?

Did Christ, or any of the Apostles, seek to change the government of Rome? Did they petition for a new governor in Palestine? Did they seek to get new senators in the Roman senate? Did they advocate for changing the laws of Rome?

Where did Christ and the Apostles focus their energy? On changing the hearts of people—why?
Because when people love each other how do they behave?

In our society today do we see love?

When we love someone who disagrees with us, how do we treat them?

Do we see in society today people treating those who disagree with them with kindness, respect, tolerance, a willingness to listen and try to understand? Do we see those who disagree giving opponents the benefit of the doubt, interpreting their words in the most gracious light, or instead instantly putting the worst possible interpretation upon them?

What is the greatest problem in society today? Is it not the lack of love for each other?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Peter was not being..." What is the principle being espoused? To seek to live in harmony with God's design and apply God's principles in our actions, which would mean seeking to bless and help others.

Could two people, who both have concern for others in their hearts, seek to implement governmental policies that are opposed to each other?

For instance, could one person seeing poverty and wanting to help those without food, shelter, education, suggest a program which provides money for those individuals to spend to purchase food, clothing shelter etc.?

Could another person, equally concerned, suggest a program that provides work, job training, employment but ties the money to work?

Could the two people end up fighting, yet both initially have the same goal?

What ends up complicating such altruistic actions being implemented through human governments? The inevitable involvement of people who are not converted to love others and who will exploit the system for selfish gain.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question

#1 “Should Christians never stand up for their rights? As you do, consider this question, as well: Just what are our rights?”

Why did Jesus say turn the other cheek when struck unjustly? Why did Jesus say if someone takes your coat give them your shirt as well? What was Jesus trying to teach?

How do we overcome selfishness? Can we overcome selfishness by acting selfish? Can we drive out sickness with disease?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (1963)

Question #2: “What are examples in which the impact of Christians on society has been a powerful force in changing society for good?”

- Charitable organizations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, Samaritan Center etc.)
- The constitution of the USA, liberty of conscience, separation of church and state
- End to slavery
- Health, wellness and anti-addiction programs
- Justice systems that seen genuine fairness
- Movements that seek equality of all human beings
- Others?

Question #3: “What are examples in which Christians, instead of helping change the ills of society, acquiesced to those ills and even helped justify them?”

- Inquisition—unjust

- Crusades and wars (Rwanda, Nazi Germany)
- Intolerance of beliefs
- Promoting the Divine right of Kings
- Subjugation of women
- Seeking to control the state to advance the gospel

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>