

Chapter One: the Presence of Love

A Spiritual Revolution

The Examples

Here's a ferocious-looking man, tall, 6 foot 5 inches, 280 pounds of muscle, a skinhead. But he's just a balding, middle-aged teddy bear, strong from decades of hauling and pouring concrete. He does look ferocious. He was a street fighter, then graduated to fighting in riotous bars as a bouncer. Raised at the edge of a garbage dump in the inner city, he was a tough guy. His father was a Colonel in Hells Angels, so at age 11 he watched dad pulverize a man's legs who owed him money. Trying to breakaway from dad's outlaw world, he got married young, but it blew up. He met another girl in a bar he worked at and tried marriage again when she got pregnant. With two sweet little twin girls, they tried to make their family succeed, so they went to different Evangelical churches to raise their girls right. It helped, but his wife became a compulsive gambler and he returned to compulsive drinking and their sweet girls became not sweet in the high school party scene. Divorce and disasters were pending. Then the whole family changed. First it was the girls who delightfully changed. They became more loving and cared about their parents' marriage. The curious parents had to visit the Christian fellowship their girls kept begging them to attend. That's when their parents slowly discovered they didn't understand that Christianity included *love relationships* beginning with God, love which healed their family and spread to others.

It's called God's Victorious Love. The former street fighter became a fun, energetic and important person to many people he served lovingly. His wife's gambling addiction melted away, replaced by the significance and emotional rewards that only love delivers. They are hopelessly in love with each other, and their spiritual enthusiasm is contagious to be around.

Then there's a middle age psychology professor and his wife, both raised in dysfunctional, substance-abuse and abusive families but exposed to Christian salvation who got married in college and then wandered across the USA, from coast to coast, including the Midwest, trying to build meaningful Christian lives in a variety of evangelical churches. But their marriage kept declining. His psychology career mushroomed while she became increasingly

agoraphobic and hostile at home. Then they bumped into God's Victorious Love back in the Midwest and it all began changing. His career addiction softened, he began investing emotionally at home, and her agoraphobia melted away. For the first time, after nearly two decades, they began building a warm family home and meaningful lives as Christian leaders and teachers reaching college students alienated from Christianity.

Those are only two examples of a long parade of hundreds of unlikely souls from crazy-diverse backgrounds, socio-economic worlds, religious and non-religious families, but mostly younger people from Gen-X, Millennials and younger generations. It's the younger generations which seem unreachable and utterly bored with Christianity and traditional religions.

This young black girl was raised by an atheist single mom, but she also attended a Catholic school in a poor section of town. She considered herself already Christian because she paid the price for that label through her Catholic religion classes, and she was a high functioning, good and moral girl ready to get her college degree. (She flunked religion class, but still she paid a price for that label.) She too met God's Victorious Love and exchanged the Christian pretense for the real thing.

Then there's a sharp young man from the Appalachian Mountains, raised United Methodist but utterly bored with traditional church. He was on the fast track to career stardom in graduate school when God's Victorious Love arrested him, finally admitting he never understood much about Christianity except how to spell it. He started teaching and leading so many other church-disenfranchised while he graduated with an MA and kept excelling professionally, but his greatest thrill was watching God's Victorious Love change lives all around him.

Their lives changed, but not easily. They didn't get zapped.

One young man describes how Victorious Love struck him as a PhD candidate in mechanical engineering. He went from devout atheist to a different way of talking:

I had no idea Christians could be so down-to-Earth and real. I never knew they weren't always phony. It was disarming, warming, and a wake-up call. I always thought that Christianity wanted something from me – money, political activism, support of the evangelical agenda. I'd never known that the Gospel

■ didn't want anything from me. My brother came and witnessed the same miracle, then my wife and my mom.

His atheist, intellectual arguments melted away in the face of God's Victorious Love which he saw in the lives of these "down-to-Earth" Believers. It seems uncharacteristic for an atheist and an engineer to be so captivated by something so spiritual and invisible, but the effects of love were highly visible. Despite his efforts to live strictly in the physical realm, he always knew love makes human life worth living, and love comes from the spiritual realm. Love lies at the center of true Christianity.

The list goes on – more atheists, agnostics, Catholic and Protestant dropouts, Wiccans, a few Jews and Muslims – all sorts of people disenfranchised and unreachable by traditional Christian churches. But when they found God's Victorious Love, suddenly the Bible made perfect sense. It's the only available guide to understanding what love is and how it works.

The Founder

First, it's important to understand it's the Bible, not any specific religion, that makes the most sense. *Bible* is a Greek word for *book*, but historically considered *THE BOOK* because it's the only one in human history where God speaks for Himself about Himself, directly. So, the Bible claims it is God's Word to humankind, literally, not figuratively, not from a wise man or wise men or angels...

■ For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

"Living and active" is the huge difference between God's words and human wisdom. The Book demonstrates in so many verifiable ways that it is God's Word. But look, God literally speaks on page one...

■ God said, "Let there be light!" Genesis 1:6

That's a damn good opening line for God's voice. Can't think of a better one.

So back to this Victorious Love movement. It's not a local phenomena. It's a spiritual movement – a perpetual, spiritual revolution – described from beginning to end in The Book.

God's Word also splashed on this planet in majesty and glory, verifiably a supernatural revelation of God by God. God's Word splits the human timeline into BC and AD – history before and after. Everything changed through an impossible event, but historically verifiable – a well-documented feat of resurrection from death, which made a big impression on the Roman Empire and melted all the networks of Pagan religions with their marble, glorious temples like ice cubes on a summer day. The movement arrived through “The King of God's Rescue,” which is what the name *Jesus Christ* means. Informally, he can be called *JC* because he's a brother, a friend, not a religious icon. His entry into the human timeline is God's gift to humankind, which is why The Book calls it “Good News” and everyone agrees that's a good title for this movement – just “the Good News.” JC said he came specifically to...

■ “To preach the gospel to the poor.” Luke 4:18a

Which is “good news” indeed! It also means...

■ “...to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” Luke 4:18-19

“The Lord” is the title most often used in The Book, a warm title referring to our Creator God. As the founder of this spiritual movement, JC bears 40 different names or titles we know about, but here's a big name he literally carries around with him...

■ On His thigh He has a name tattooed, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19:16

An impressive tattoo, a *tat*, as they say. Tats are like badges of honor for tough guys and gals, but who dares walking around with a tat like that? The author of Victorious Love wears those big titles because JC is not weak, and his love is not weakness. He's the only one in history to demonstrate that love is not just emotionally strong or metaphorically victorious, but able to topple the most powerful regimes, beginning with the almighty Roman Empire. That's called *real-world victorious*.

In one list of his titles, written 700 years beforehand, Victorious Love is contained in the lead title...

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

“Mighty God” and “Eternal Father” are big titles. But “Wonderful Counselor” leads the list, and it’s most relevant because it explains how all those people were captured by God’s Victorious Love. “Captured” in the sense these people were snatched from spiritual, loveless prisons. He came “to proclaim release to the captives” and “set free those who are oppressed,” as described above, but he also captured them with his love, like this...

“He led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”
Ephesians 4:8

Nobody in human history has done anything like it – conquering, capturing, setting prisoners free and the rest without weapons or money or protests or any of the usual tools of human revolution. He taught people how to love and what love is, which is the epitome of a Wonderful Counselor. People would not typically describe their psychologist that way.

Here’s the point – this Wonderful Counsellor, or JC, entered this realm specifically to deliver God’s Victorious Love to humankind. His mission was clear from the beginning...

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

It’s a well-known declaration of the Christian message. Somehow the part about “God so loved” seems to be overlooked or misunderstood or minimized, since people don’t often think of Christianity as, “God so loved the world”.

There’s need for *disambiguation*, as Wikipedia says. “God so loved” means God’s Victorious Love, by necessity, because *when God loves it’s victorious*. That’s disambiguation between love as humans experience it and love as God knows it – it’s the difference between something *inspirational* versus *victorious*. God’s love is not limp-noodle, mushy, feel-good, deep thoughts. God Himself is the universal definition of love, it says...

God is Love. 1 John 4:19

Three words. Such is the genius of God’s Word in The Book.

The Movement

Aside from his brief, three-year visit that ended with his crucifixion and resurrection, JC left behind a movement that could not be suppressed by his death. What defined and propelled such a movement that was overwhelmingly victorious, despite the sudden execution of their leader? They all knew God's Victorious Love was their strength and path forward, described by his Apostles this way:

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us
Ephesians 5:1-2

And so, the Apostle Paul writes that religious rituals are useless, adding...

The only thing that matters is faith working through love.
Galatians 5:6

The movement grew this way...

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, Ephesians 4:15

It was spearheaded by a host of motivated and strangely competent average people, both men and women, who taught from The Book as their script. It was foreknown and prophesied by God long centuries before...

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." Romans 10:18

Because in this movement God reveals Himself to humankind, in God's own words...

"I was found by those who did not seek me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for me." Romans 10:20

Along with God's Word came God's Victorious Love, which validated the Good News through prophecies given over a 1500-year period beforehand, in amazing detail. Still today, despite the decline of traditional churches, the movement continues, spearheaded by "those who did not seek me" but who found God's Victorious Love. They are the "Barefoot Pastors", trouncing around tens of thousands of villages in India. They are peasant-missionaries in rural, Communist China, which has more Christians than Communists. Where did 100 million Chinese

Christians come from? In Africa, the continent was swept by native messengers reaching millions of millions. The myth that Christianity is a white man's religion belittles the rainbow of races who did their own work. "Their voice has gone out into all the earth," which was all it required.

The Great Apostle Peter writes, near the end of his life, as he saw much persecution and confusion coming their way soon...

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

Church history is correctly summarized as "a multitude of sins..." Everyone agrees on that by now – even diehard Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Despite such egregious errors, the presence of Victorious Love "covers" it, which means it's still alive and working beneath the surface of religious institutions.

Church Versus Fellowship

If God's love is so victorious, why are so many people bored with it in the USA? Why the widespread loathing towards *church*? Church attendance has been precipitously declining in the USA for decades, and now 70 to 80% of Christian homes are losing their kids to a secular culture promising global unity and a new personal religion that cannot be described easily because there are no holy books or leaders or scriptures, no definition of the new "god" or "gods" these younger generations believe in.

There problem is a gap like the Grand Canyon standing between the recent USA phenomenon called "church" and God's Victorious Love campaign which spans history and spans the globe elsewhere. What JC launched met with wild success as it swept across the Roman Empire. It was sustained across two millennia and received joyfully across all continents.

For disambiguation purposes, call one side of the Grand Canyon *church* and the other side *fellowship*, which was the word first used to describe it in The Book, like this:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to breaking bread together and to prayers. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe. Acts 2:42-43

“A sense of awe” is not how most people describe their old church experience. The “fellowship” those first Believers experienced certainly was awesome, “breaking bread together” and the teachings and everything else “they were continually devoting themselves to.” They couldn’t help it.

“Fellowship” is the English translation of the Greek word which basically means “common sharing”, which is the idea behind fellowship – common sharing. Not a priest or pastor sharing while everyone else takes, which is how people who left it behind remember *church* – a dreadful memory for many.

Anyway, *church* is an anachronism, not even a good translation of the Greek word *assembly* in The Book. *Fellowship* or *assembly* is what God called it. Church is a building with strange things inside – spooky things and religious artifacts. The strict and formal atmosphere filled with ancient, singing hymns or thunderous, angry preachers pounding away on pulpits at the people is not conducive to warm *fellowship*, which is what God wants. Like this...

Since you have been purified by responding to the Truth for a sincere love of the brethren, now fervently love one another from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22

Fellowship is always evolving and growing, from “sincere love” to “love one another *from the heart*,” which must include emotional, personal investment that makes a difference in people’s lives. Fellowship is where people build *significance* into each other, like this...

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; Romans 12:10

To “give preference” means making *someone else* a priority – that’s significance. When Believers come together, they should be learning more about Victorious Love, because that’s what God wants to teach us...

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Fellowship is where God teaches people *how to love*.

Church has become *God-in-a-box*, where God theoretically lives. He's tucked safely away from mainstream USA life. Church is not where "everyone kept feeling a sense of awe" in the memories of new American generations.

Misdirections

On a farm spread across rolling hills in central Ohio, among grazing cows and hay fields and rustling corn fields there were scores of long-haired young people working in fields or barns, harvesting hay or shoveling manure in sweltering summer heat. But they were a joyful and loving community. It was the Jesus Freak movement, and this was a Christian commune. At night, the long-hair rebels gathered in their dorms, enjoying their relationships without the drugs that dominated Woodstock and the "Summer of Love" a couple years earlier. Instead, these hippies enjoyed living and working and singing together, studying the Bible, listening to Bible teachings and enjoying heaven on earth. I was there, age 16, with a massive, puffy "fro" that made me look like a walking dandelion. I was baptized there in a farm pond by two middleaged men leading the commune who were formerly regional directors of Campus Crusade for Christ – an evangelical Christian organization spread across almost all USA campuses. The Jesus Freak was nationwide. Millions of young Boomers were swept up in it. They were all disenfranchised from traditional Christian churches. It was a time of amazing, spiritual excitement and upheaval. But it began with disillusionment.

Disillusionment with *church* took off about a half century ago as the Boomer generation began dominating USA culture. They launched a cultural revolution against traditional church and embraced radical New Age religions and computer technologies which are now common in the USA. Boomers followed the chants of their rock-n-roll stars. They called it "*Rock-n-Roll Suicide!*" and sang, "Long live rock! *Be it dead or alive!*"

It was a silly revolution. *How can something "long live" if it's dead?* It made sense to Boomers, who loved their drugs, like LSD and weed. The USA was transformed from a black-and-white world into a glorious colors and complexity they bequeathed to later generations. In the 21st C the Boomer social revolution continues with similar chants for *tolerance, inclusion and diversity*.

What was inciting all the revolution? The much despised “black-and-white world” was *Christianity* and *church* – everyone knew it. Boomers gladly fled their parent’s churches *en masse*, denouncing the moralistic, uptight world they met in churches. Instead, the Boomers championed “love” and shouted, “Make love, not war!” in their campus riots. Not far from the Mansfield Christian commune, four students were killed and others wounded at Kent State University when the National Guard tried stamping out campus riots.

Almost immediately, young Boomers flocked back to Christianity in the Jesus Freak movement because sex, drugs and rock-n-roll did not “take us back to the Garden” of Eden, as Boomers thought. What did the Jesus Freaks do? They built megachurches. They denounced moral decline in the USA. The church exodus kept steadily increasing since the 1970s, which also meant an equivalent diminishing of God’s clear voice across the USA, the former Jesus Freaks complained. But far more obvious was the diminishing of authentic love. America grew more loveless as people drifted away from the Author of love. Families disintegrated *en masse*. By the early 21st C, about 60 to 75 percent of children were raised in single parent homes, and this rising collapse of family love also brought a wave of scholastic failures, vocational failures, rising crime and a massive increase in poverty. There is almost a 100% correlation between school shooters and divorced, troubled homes. Nobody notices it or talks much about it when the problems of gun violence and school shootings are raised.

The campaign to return the USA to a “Judeo-Christian” moral foundation stretched across a half century. The cultural shift and collapse of Christian churches was clearly seen beforehand by Christians across all denominations, both Catholics and Protestants, and a long parade of national Christian figures like Billy Graham, Francis Schaeffer, and others warned loud and clear about pending social chaos. They saw both families along with Christian churches collapsing, since the two are often tied together. As kids became parents, they grew more interested in church for their family’s sake.

But the campaign to restore Judeo-Christian morality failed. The cultural revolution against “black-and-white world” morality won. And, as predicted, the cultural shift did not produce more loving families or people. The evidence is overwhelming, it’s not worth rehashing.

Corrections

Here's the big question – did America become loveless after drifting away from Christian churches, or did people drift away from churches that were already loveless?

Rephrased – did the USA *church experience* first lose the *fellowship experience*, which meant losing the *love experience*, which then created a loveless, *moral experience* at church?

Christians fall into a trap by emphasizing morality and values more than love. God says that *love is the goal of Christian instruction...*

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5

Emphasizing a “pure heart” and “good conscience” is misdirection, yet this was clearly the emphasis for the Family Values and Judeo-Christian movements. “The goal of our instruction is love,” God tells us. Only in that context will good morality and proper values make any sense.

The Primacy of Love is missing. Love is not ignored in Christian churches but receives far less attention compared to the huge emphasis given moral issues. People learn specifics about morals, but they don't understand the specifics of God's Victorious Love. This is evident since Christian divorces kept climbing during these Christian moral campaigns, nearly reaching the 50 percent divorce level seen in secular culture. Young Boomers rebelled against Christian America because they said it was too rigid and authoritarian, reflecting cultural norms and traditions from centuries earlier, from the age of European monarchies. By emphasizing morality first and foremost, the Christian voice became increasingly irrelevant to a changing, complex culture. To those disenfranchised from Christianity, morality is a personal choice. They don't understand the need for morality. They do, however, understand the need for love. Love is universally meaningful and necessary.

The cultural drift was probably inevitable, despite all the warnings and great alarm from Christian churches across the USA. Everything traditional was swept away by endless upheavals in the late 20th C. There were sudden upheavals of excessive wealth and golden careers the USA never knew before. New Age Baby Boomer religions and pervasive drug use were new phenomena. Most massive of all were the technical upheavals reshaping cultures across the globe. Rapid transportation and especially the PC and Internet redefined human relationships.

The global upheaval continues in the 21st C with the *Information Explosion*, where technical-scientific knowledge is doubling every 12 hours through global communication networks, an exponential growth which has been measured for a half century. These social technologies keep growing, toppling social norms, mores and traditions everywhere – not just in traditional churches. Nobody can keep up with the tsunami of changes, including new global threats like COVID-19 and Global Warming. Every few years, new upheavals appear, including nonstop wars, weapons of mass destruction in the hands of crazy tyrants. Even the secular world can't keep up. Governments work for years to reach some global accord, but any agreements are immediately antiquated and overshadowed with even greater global threats.

Despite the increasing social upheavals, one thing remains beautifully stable – God's Victorious Love. His love cannot be suppressed by institutional church failures, nor by flimsy spiritual imitations romancing the American mind. Popping up all over the world are pockets of God's Victorious Love in places where loving Believers reach and teach and heal others with it.

It's helpful to first grasp what God says about His relationship with humankind, because He says this:

■ We love because God first loved us. 1 John 4:19

So how does God love humans? Knowing this separates “love” in its generic, confused sense from Victorious Love, which is specific and practical and comprehensible. God's viewpoint is the best viewpoint to start with, because “God is love.”

Chapter 2: The Universal Digest

When the Lord launched his spiritual movement, the Apostle Paul described this was simply a fulfillment of the Lord's blueprints laid out "before the foundations of Creation". It is a *Universal Digest* that spans Creation...

"...with a view towards an Administration *{or, Household}* suitable to the fullness of the times *{Lit., all Epochs}*, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." (Ephesians 1:10)

It may seem cryptic or vague, but Paul nailed it, with precision. It could be dismissed since it mandates some thought, but this is so intriguing...why dismiss it? This "view" is so far reaching, enveloping "the fullness of all epochs" in the biblical narrative, it stretches from Eternity Past into Eternity Future. Paul is describing not only all the epochs of time, but all universes, both physical and spiritual.

If all this sounds too fantastic for any human accomplishment, it's true. Except this Universal Digest comes from The Book, which is the Lord's greatest, most enduring gift to humankind. This summary is authoritative and very real.

What does the Lord's Universal Digest describe? It is "the summing up of all things in Christ." It means *resolution*. Across all Creation. Which includes unknown billions, or trillions of spiritual beings brought under the Lord's authority and leadership – a resolution not through conquest and coercion. Rather, it's the product of the Lord's Victorious Love. The Book puts it this way:

Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:8)

The Book tells the history of the Lord's Victorious Love and demonstrates what it is and what it's not. Nothing is more profound or rewarding than love *if it is victorious*. Conversely, what is more painful when love is crushed?

Victorious Love promises a lifetime of significance. Magic unfolds when the Lord's Victorious Love sweeps away the failures of a lifetime and charts a whole new course of

understanding. Victorious Love does not produce the instant thrills and chills people crave, but it does build emotional sweetness that keeps growing.

Ultimately, love defines the most victorious life of all. Even the greatest achievements or wealth and power are unsatisfying when life is lonely. George Tesla, the science genius who electrified the world with AC current among other great achievements, he ended up a lonely, old man. Despite his fame and wealth, his life was tragic. His only companions were the pigeons he fed in Central Park.

As The Book says,

■ If I know all mysteries and all knowledge but do not have love, I am nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:2)

It's necessary to understand how God's love is so foundational to human life – it's foundational to all spiritual life. It separates failure from success, even if "I know all mysteries and all knowledge," since the Lord promises "Love never fails"

The Powers that Be

The great struggle described in the Universal Digest spans all the "epochs of time," Paul wrote. Three powers are engaged in one, universal effort. It is a campaign the Lord is waging across all Creation. There is a hierarchy, an order of importance engaged in this universal struggle.

At the center is *the King of God's Rescue*, who is the central authority in the Universe, and he is driving this campaign towards a *universal purpose*. His authority defines a framework for all spiritual activity in Creation. How sweet it is to learn that *freedom* is the outcome of this King's authority ...

■ It was for freedom that Christ set us free (Galatians 5:1)

That simple declaration of human freedom was written at the apex of the brutal reign of the Roman Empire when the concept of individual liberty was nonexistent. Freedom was declared soon after his crucifixion and resurrection, when the King said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth," and then set in motion his new freedom-authority. The

King began altering the course of human history towards freedom for the past 2000 years. *Freedom* is the nature of “the Summing Up of all things” under the authority of The King.

Right here is a glaring inconsistency between religious institutions engineered by humans and the freedom-authority of the King. It reveals the difference between church and the King’s Administration. The church experience is heavily rule-oriented, most people leaving church would agree, with a major emphasis on morality, “Family Values”, sin versus righteousness, but not promoting freedom. It affects how love is understood or taught in churches where freedom is not strongly emphasized and embraced. More than any other human relationship, the love relationships require free choice.

But this freedom-authority raises a glaring question – how is it possible for authority and freedom to coexist? The answer is seen in the second power mentioned in Paul’s Universal Digest.

The second power is an “Administration”, which is big—a big, big enterprise, bigger than the US federal government, and it’s massively funded, but not with printed paper. The currency in the Lord’s economy is *love*. It looks like this...

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5 (NASB)

The King’s love is the motivation, the fuel, the energy driving this enormous Administration. This “love of God” is not the gooey stuff that dominates pop culture, like Disney kid movies. It isn’t the polite stuff that often characterizes people’s church experience. This is Victorious Love, it’s for adults. It changes the future, so “hope does not disappoint...” When hope is aligned with the Lord’s Victorious Love...

The Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." Romans 10:11

The Lord’s Administration does not deliver disappointment. That’s a big difference between religious institutions and the King’s Administration.

Although it's big, his Administration is not a fat, cold bureaucracy. It's more like a "Household", which is another, close translation of the same Greek word. Anyway, it is organized, but it's also an extremely flattened hierarchy, where every person is...

Holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. Colossians 2:19

If everyone is directly accountable to the King, here's the truly radical part...

"But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. "Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. Matthew 23:8-10

Nobody has ever proposed an organization like this. How can such a flattened hierarchy work? Simple. The lines between people in the Administration and their King looks like this...

Their hearts are encouraged, having been knit together in love...resulting in a true knowledge of the Lord's mystery, that is, Christ Himself (*Colossians 2:2*)

Although there are leaders, teachers and organizations bearing the name "Christian", the true, underlying authority is "Christ Himself" for everyone in His Administration. Within human organizations (and outside them) God's Administration appears – often, just in pockets and corners of religious institutions. Sometimes it's evident on a much greater scale – more widespread within a population of Believers. Much depends on whether the religious organization overshadows or tries to exclude God's Administration. The result is a diminished presence of God's love within a religious institution.

Together, through love relationships, the King and his Administration are working on a third power far more massive, more chaotic and far-flung, which includes "things in the heavens and things on the earth," Paul wrote. This includes everything on Planet Earth, this physical universe and even universes beyond perception—all the diverse forms of life in Creation.

It is this far-flung network of spiritual creatures "in the heavens and earth" is where the greatest impact of the Universal Summary is felt. It's important to understand that love is not an

isolated experience felt by a single person. It's meaning, shape and form is very much altered and affected by a spiritual war raging throughout Creation.

The Relational Creation

The Universal Digest says that Creation is inherently *relational*, flooded with intelligent, relational creatures. Long before the dust and rocks of the physical universe materialized, the Lord explains how Creation was first teeming with relational creatures. These extraterrestrial creatures witnessed the birth of a new, inconceivable realm we call the physical universe. At some point in Eternity Past, the Lord gathered these creatures together and said, "Watch this!" Then...it erupted. The Big Bang they saw was so electrifying, so glorious, all the watching universe burst out in a glorious, thunderous chorus of music – they express the inexpressible in singing voices!

What a wild glimpse of Creation is found in God's Word! The creatures filling "the Heavens" are not strictly bound by the fabric of spacetime holding the physical universe together. They existed long before spacetime existed. Their native environ is the Heavens where the Lord's Throne is centered, where "a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day," it says. It was bewildering to them seeing the physical universe appear, woven in the fabric of time and space. From the Heavens, time appears relative. It speeds up or slows down as desired, or as the Lord desires, so a day is 1000 years, or vice-versa. What are called "the Heavenly Hosts" watched the physical universe morph as the Lord fine-tuned its growth through complex mathematics and natural laws never seen before. Today we understand something about how the universe emerged with massive energy, unleashing forces like electromagnetism, gravity, the "weak force" and the "strong force" governing the subatomic world and nuclear fission – all of it, never imagined before. All Creation is so glorious, beyond description, which the physical universe clearly demonstrates. The point is that all the glorious significance of Creation is only possible because *there is an audience of relational creatures engaged in its glory*, singing about it. Relational creatures look at atomic dust and rocks and call it "glorious".

"The heavens" sounds so lofty and ethereal, what's the practical application? Simply this – "*relational*" and "*spiritual*" are synonymous in biblical terms. Humans too are relational,

just like the ancient Hosts of the Heavens, so humans also are spiritual like they are. Whatever is relational is spiritual because:

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. *1 Corinthians 13:13*

Faith, hope, and love are eternal, which means *spiritual*, which also means *supernatural*. Whatever is spiritual is not subject to decay and death governing the physical universe. Love as humans understand love is spiritual—unlike the biological, physical attachments animals instinctively form—since human love is part of the supernatural, spiritual realm. Along with faith and hope, love is eternal, and they all originated in the spiritual Creation long before the physical Creation. A genuine, loving relationship is a spiritual relationship. Humans express love in physical ways, of course, but love is a spiritual experience in human life. Since “the greatest of these is love,” it explains why love is such a deeply felt, profound experience in human life.

The Human Connection

To love and be loved is the greatest human need because it is a spiritual need, and the spiritual realm dominates the physical realm. People go love hunting all lifelong in the physical world, but it remains an elusive, dissatisfying quest without spiritual direction. The Bible says the proper quest for love follows a chain reaction of “faith, hope, and love,” *ending with love*. Even though “the greatest of these is love,” there is no shortcut to that great reward. It must begin with Faith, which is a quest to find someone trustworthy, someone worth investing time and resources. Despite what is commonly said about faith, the biblical concept of faith rests on facts, so faith is synonymous with trust. Once someone trustworthy is found, then realistic hope is possible – the relationship blossoms with the excitement and dreams and possibilities that perhaps this will become a loving relationship. As these hopes materialize in the real world, then the commitment to a love relationship can open wide. As a love relationship deepens, it becomes obvious that, “the greatest of these is love!” Finding love delivers so much, including strong emotional rewards which increase emotional strength. These strong, positive emotions are called *Present Love Feelings* in Love Ethics, or simply *Love Feelings*. Emotionally fortified people are strong people who can absorb far more stress and punishment than someone who feels alone and unloved. People fueled by Love Feelings carry emotional reserves needed to fight and live in the daily world full of tremendous strain and conflicts.

The exact opposite chain reaction can occur with opposite effects. When trust is broken, then hopes are dashed, which also removes the foundation and framework for the love relationship. This is how love turns tragically broken and lost, which also inflicts tremendous, negative emotional pain as Love Feelings disappear. Memories of emotional pain also make it more difficult to start over and trust someone else. Repeated, tragic experiences with love are incredibly damaging, so it becomes almost terrifying to trust, hope or love with anyone else.

The effects of tragic love over a human lifetime cause all kinds of emotional disturbances like high anxiety, depression, anger issues and other irrational behaviors including psychotic behaviors because emotions are inherently non-rational, and emotional pain without relief will erupt in unpredictable, destructive ways as they lash out at people. The opposite also is true, where successful, long-term love relationships result in stability, emotional strength and greater output.

Most important of all, with Victorious Love comes significance, or what The Book calls “glory”. Glory is not a word commonly used in English today, but it means significance. This connection between love and significance is made repeatedly and clearly in the Lord’s Word, like this instance where great religious or human achievements are compared to Victorious Love...

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of the Lord’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

In short, Paul writes, “Without love, *I am a nobody.*”

All humans are emotional creatures, not machines. People who claim to live based on pure logic are confused. Emotional needs must be satisfied, and love provides the greatest satisfaction of all, according to God’s Word. The most reliable path to emotional satisfaction comes from the faith-hope-love chain reaction, “and the greatest of these is love,” the Lord says.

This is Good News for lonely people, brokenhearted people, or anyone looking for significance, or anyone trying to build a loving marriage or a loving family – *our loving Creator made a great effort to explain love*. He took pains to model Victorious Love by stepping into the human realm and practicing it. Despite the hateful human condition, this is discoverable. The Lord authored The Book specifically to explain Victorious Love for humankind.

But first, to understand love through God's eyes, it's necessary to distinguish between Victorious Love and other types and ideas of love since the word "love" is so broad and jumbled especially in the sophisticated, somewhat cold and loveless Modern Era. Victorious Love begins with focusing on the person (or persons) *who need to be loved*. Victorious Love is victorious because it's not obsessed with "Who loves me?" Rather, the primary question is, "Who do I love?" It's simply amazing to see *who* God loves...

The Spiritual Handicap



The Social Media Herd

When it comes to humankind, the Lord's view is the reverse of the warmhearted, popular view sometimes called "the New Humanity," where humans see themselves as lovable and loving, since "most people are good." Through reason and education, it's believed the best of human nature can flourish. During the global Covid-19 pandemic of the early 21st C, the slogan widely used was, "We are in this together!" This slogan kept people quarantined in their homes. But God says divisions and hatred and war are always boiling beneath the mottos of coexistence and unity. He says of humankind...

"Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips...their feet are

swift to shed blood...the path of peace they have not known."
Romans 3:13-17

Not a pretty picture, but undeniably accurate. Has anyone ever explained “the path of peace” for humankind, or even for a family?

Humankind also holds an exaggerated view of its intelligence, which God disagrees with. We are told in school that humans are enthroned at the highest level of the natural order, perched at the crest of the food chain. This is true, but only if comparing humans against dumb animals on this planet. It looks much different considering life forms with *spiritual capacity*. Daily human life would be terrifying we were exposed to the full scope of Creation, which includes spiritual creatures crawling around this planet and beyond. The Lord shields humans from direct exposure, thankfully, although there is plenty of indirect exposure.

The Lord gently warns humankind about its lowly position without exposing us to its terror. Across the vast Creation, humans are wallowing on the floor of intelligence, mostly because humans are so highly handicapped spiritually – *spiritually dense*. The Lord says humankind is helpless, truly handicapped...

Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes
but do not see, who have ears but do not hear. (Jeremiah 5:21)

Deafness and blindness are serious handicaps greatly compounded by overall disregard and apathy. Humans are helplessly hopeless, spiritually. People widely recognize there is a spiritual need, but what is it? The answers across the world are contradictory, uncertain and vague, which straightaway points to a spiritual handicap.

How long can a blind person stroll around downtown without a cane and stay alive? “Hey, watch out y’all!” the blind person yells, “Here comes the blind person!” More than a disadvantage, a handicap is potentially quite dangerous.

Oblivious to spiritual handicaps, people all over the world jump into the spiritual realm. But who is the guide? What guide? Who needs a guide? Need drives people into the spiritual realm, but what drives that need? Gut feelings? Bad feelings? This is especially true in the West, where dabbling in spiritual phenomena and speculation is so enticing and rampant, where the maxim is, “If I think it’s true, then it’s true!” *Really?*

People are leaving their churches, disillusioned or bored, often hopping into the spiritual realm and seeking love through spiritual channels far removed from The Book which God provided humankind. To charge boldly into the spiritual realm dominated by spiritual strangers must be dangerous. Isn't it dangerous to jump in a stranger's car? Equally dangerous is jumping into a new spiritual movement.

Voices everywhere in the 21st C are claiming new, spiritual portals are available, discovering spiritual "secrets" (like "The Secret"), and chasing a dizzying array of spiritual directions. All of it is equally credible, claims the maxim of modernity. After all, enlightened thinking is inclusive, not divisive, right? The new, enlightened spirituality is the manifestation of old, handicapped spirituality which disregards the possibility of spiritual deception and spiritual evil. Is it so difficult to be victimized in the spiritual realm? Is it so difficult to accept the handicaps of spiritual blindness and deafness?

As a warning, Paul wrote about the massive spiritual conflict raging across all Creation in this way:

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (*Ephesians 6:12*)

Against such creatures, humans are helpless children. Like a little girl playing hide-n-seek with a serial pedophile, humans are incapable of playing harmlessly with "spiritual rulers" and "world forces," and all those magnificent "forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." It should not be surprising that malevolent spiritual creatures are more glorious, more beautiful, and far more enticing than any human criminal. The greatest threats on this planet are not from criminals, megalomaniacs, or psychopathic killers. The real threat to human life comes from sources beyond human perception, but still able to dominate humans.

Put another way, the Bible says humans are "dead" while "walking according to the course of this World." It sounds like *The Walking Dead*! People muddle through life like zombies, like machines, suppressing the awareness that life is turning out to be lifeless. Nobody plans it. Somehow it just happens. Gradually. Pushed along by invisible, spiritual forces, the Lord tells us.

Earthlings are herded like cattle by “the Prince of the Power of earth’s atmosphere,” the Bible says. That “Prince” is “the Spirit energizing” earthlings into herds. It describes the mob mindset driving the blunders and evil of history, repetitiously. Like the French Revolution. Like lynch mobs. Or like the Nazi mobs whipped up across Europe to massacre six million Jews in gas ovens—European antisemitism was a mindless, international complicity, not a local German problem. Today that same mob mindset is innocuously called “the Wisdom of the Crowd,” highly influential and revered, driven by Social Media like Twitter or Facebook. But the phenomenon is no less thoughtless and dangerous as mob rule, groupthink, mass hysteria, herd mentality, or any other term that describes truly brain-dead, shameful behavior scarring history. The reason? Humans are so “helpless” and “lost”, “blind” and “deaf”, as masses people are so easily driven into frenzies by the “Prince of the power of earth’s atmosphere.”

The helplessness of human life is painfully evident as death approaches. People are acutely aware of the tragedy and pain of death, all lifelong. The loss of love relationships through death creates an obsession with the afterlife, so burial of the dead along with religious artifacts always marks human civilization. Everyone knows about the afterlife, everyone has ideas, people hope their dead loved ones are not forever gone, but who understands the afterlife? It must be true, and the afterlife should exist! But which Afterlife? All the clashing, contradictory views of the spiritual afterlife cannot possibly coexist!

A Good Story?

~~NOTE: AFTER CONNECTING THIS DEVELOPMENT WITH THE OUTCOME THAT MAKES HUMANS SO GREAT. ADD THE FOLLOWING: A good friend of mine told me, “that’s an interesting story.” I was flabbergasted... Here’s something grounded in history presenting us with the purpose and story of Creation, and he thought it had to be fiction. Frankly anything that did not fit his current agenda was fiction in his world.~~

Biological Machines

~~The greatest tragedy produced by the American Cult of Secularism is the great confusion over whether a human is spiritual or simply a biological machine. This produces confusion over what “spiritual” means if it means anything. The new dogma that humans are primarily biological machines has produced a culture where anxiety and depressive disorders are soaring to epidemic levels in recent generations. Despite exhaustive research, nobody can explain it.[†] Medical science has provided chemical treatments for emotional disorders but manipulating body chemistry is a silly solution. A non solution. It is possible to eliminate all anxiety and depression by inducing a coma, but is a comatose life alive? It is an extreme example, but it does demonstrate that manipulating human biology does not address human spiritual needs.~~

Chapter 3: The New Horizon

First the Lord's Word describes the depth of human helplessness at the bottom of the spiritual universe, but then, amazingly, it says *the Lord elevated humans to the top of Creation*. At a "suitable" point in time, Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:10, the Lord created "an Administration" composed of earthlings charged with changing the future of all Creation. How can these lowly creatures take charge? How unexpected! It's weird. "The summing up of all things, things on the earth and things in the heavenlies..." *What does it mean?*

First, it means a reversal of the course of human history. This is not trite.

Second, it all revolves around *The King of the Lord's Rescue* because He appeared on earth among weak humans, as a weak human, and launched "the Lord's Rescue" across all Creation.ⁱⁱ He did it through humankind.

"The Administration" is composed of rescuers from among the lowest of all spiritual creatures, commonly called the *Body of Christ*, or the *Called-Out Assembly*.ⁱⁱⁱ Also known as *the Lord's Household*, or *Family of the Lord*, or *Spiritual Israel*, *Chosen Race*, a *Holy Nation*, a *Royal Priesthood*, a *Kingdom of Priests*, and many other titles, all these titles declare humans became the most privileged in all Creation when the King of Rescue showed up.

This privileged Administration first began altering human civilizations across the globe, beginning with the most formidable empire in history – the Roman Empire. Earth was never the same after he appeared. But also, all Creation was never the same.

Ephesians 1 goes on to explain how "things in the heavenlies" were upended when The King of the Lord's Rescue launched this new direction. the Lord very much wants us to see this massive reversal of human fortunes. It is a new future, a whole new direction:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might... (*Ephesians 1:18-19*)

This exalted position in Creation is not a spiritual abstraction. “The *hope* of His calling” is a concrete, new direction to life. Following “His calling” is like following freeway signs to escape a city traffic jam. “Hope” in the Lord’s vocabulary means *direction*. It’s not the *fuzzy feel-good* hope in Disney kid movies. This new direction means the Lord brought humankind a whole new horizon to pursue.

But there’s one, big problem...

The problem is “the eyes of your heart” where the Lord’s hope needs to blossom. First, “heart” needs clarification because the biblical word has no correlation with modern, wimpy-hearted-hope, like we need to “follow our heart of hearts...”

The “heart” means the throne of human Free Will in God’s Word. The heart defines personal existence, from where all personal choices emanate. Asking the Lord to “open the eyes of your heart *to see the hope...*” means inviting the Lord to turn on the lights to escape the maze of wandering fate that once dominated human life—escaping “lostness”, as the Bible calls it.

Believers wander around and get lost, straying away from the Primacy of Love and everything that makes the Believer’s life so beautiful. Lostness means getting stuck in a rut of stuffy religion. To “open the eyes of your heart” means asking the Lord to turn on the lights, to light up the throne room of Free Will, which is neglected and filled with cobwebs. It means taking ownership of that precious throne room. It means owning life, not getting owned. It means rediscovering that amazing capacity for human freedom, under the Lord’s direction, no matter how much damage and decay previously existed in that throne room of Free Will.

Having “the eyes of your heart” opened leads us *away from the herd*. It means stepping into the center of Creation, at the top of Creation, *where the Lord has already put us*—past tense—whether realized or not, whether felt or unfelt.

The only question the Lord asks is this – “Who wants Me to turn on the lights?”

Human Significance

Despite the intimidating stature of all the other spiritual creatures, the Lord raised humans above all Creation. Humans are in a class “greater than all the angels,” it says (Hebrews 2:16). Almost 3000 years ago, King David pondered how this was possible:

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? (*Psalm 8:3-4*)

So vast is the Lord's Creation, humans are nano-specks sprinkled across a speck of dust called Earth. King David saw that, and was amazed at the Lord's dealings with nano-specs like us:

You made humankind a little lower than the angels, and You crown him with glory and majesty! (*Psalm 8:5*)

Why does the Lord crown the nano-specs of the universe like kings? The most outstanding trait of humankind among all spiritual Creation is its amazing weakness. What real value does humankind have?

Significance is the outgrowth of love. The Lord's love for humankind is what gives humankind significance. It is vital for understanding human significance – it originates with love, first from our Creator. In the same way, a parent's love makes their child significant at birth, and before before. So too the Lord imparts significance to all humankind because he too gives life to humankind and loves humankind.

Consider how Creation is saturated with beauty only humans can appreciate. Animals don't care. People from any race, any era in history, any culture can watch a sunset, and everyone would agree that glory fills the sky. No Gallop poll is needed to prove it. Is it not obvious the Creator filled the planet with discoveries and beauty for humans who were to live in it, rule over it and study it? The Creator also gave humans gifts to grasp the mechanics of the universe, the need to understand it, the ability to reason and study it. All these innate abilities to comprehend were packaged with the innate beauty of Creation. What does it say about our Creator except something like...?

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us! 1 John 3:1

Add that declaration with the declaration repeated throughout the Bible:

The Lord said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (*2 Corinthians 6:16 – also in Ex.29:45; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 31:1; Ezek. 37:27, etc.*)

That declaration unifies the Bible. It explains *why* the Lord's activity across all Creation is centered on Planet Earth. Those words were a prophetic glimpse of the Lord's special relationship with humankind, first given to Moses 1500 years before their fulfillment and repeated often through history to other prophets.

Only God can literally fulfill that strange combination, "I will dwell *in them* and walk *among them*!" As Jesus, the Lord walked *among us*. As King, He will walk *among us* during the Millennial Kingdom. As the Holy Spirit, He dwells *within us*.

The Historical Facts

It's sweet when parents tell a child, "You're significant." The kid should say, "But can you prove it?"

God proves the significance of His children by associating Himself with humankind.

The intimate nature of these prophecies became clear as they were fulfilled, beginning with the birth of Jesus Christ, when angels from God's throne shocked a group of impoverished shepherds in the dark countryside:

Suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among humankind with whom He is pleased." Luke 2:13-14

He "is pleased" with humans and proved it. He joined human poverty, lived in poverty, and felt the pain and shock of losing his adoptive father Joseph at a young age. What tragedy! It also meant JC had to work hard as a skilled craftsman to feed his widowed mother and younger siblings, since he was the oldest.

Then, as JC's siblings grew older, he could begin his ministry, walking around Israel among fishermen and impoverished people in the remote hills of Galilee. He didn't hobnob with the rich and powerful. He befriended seedy people like tax collectors, prostitutes, and other riffraff. "I will walk among them" meant Almighty God associated himself with the weakest, most despised among the weakest creatures in Creation. "These are my friends!" the Lord to all Creation. He also declared it to them...

"No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends"
John 15:15

The people of Israel were taught to worship the Lord as His servants. After He “walked among them,” He could also call them “friends.”

After Jesus was resurrected in 33 AD, the Holy Spirit appeared at Pentecost in Jerusalem, and then the Lord fulfilled his promise to “*dwell in them!*” Thus, a new era of humanity began. It is called the “New Covenant” in God’s Word, which means *New Promise*, because it was promised centuries earlier in prophecies, promising to change the course of history by changing how people felt in their hearts. AD on the human timeline marks the era when the Holy Spirit came to “*dwell in them*”.

What difference does it make to have the Holy Spirit “dwell in them”? It was described centuries earlier by those prophets...

The Holy Spirit also testifies to us, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,” says the Lord: “I will put my laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them.” He then says, “and their rebellion and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Hebrews 10:15-17

“My laws upon their heart and mind” describes the spiritual process called *Transformation*, or change. It becomes obvious the change means the ability to love like God loves. Not only change, but wiping away the past scarred by “their rebellion” and “lawless deeds”, which means the personal history of defeat, the pain inflicted on others, and all the different ways people soil their past are replaced with a new life of significance, marked by love.

Such intimacy with the Almighty Creator was inconceivable before He created humans. The angels were created long before the physical universe and they must have marveled at how the Lord thought so highly of this weak, human creature. The Bible confirms this angelic amazement:

“These are things into which angels long to look,” 1 Peter 1:12.

Victorious Love

Why does God love us? Is He showing off? “Look what I can do!” he says.

The Lord loves humans because he sees the potential in every human who responds to His love. In the same way parents love their newborn, long before the child does anything deserving their love, even when their children are born extremely handicapped. Consider Down syndrome babies or any other handicap, it's an amazing phenomenon how parents still love those children, but they can do it because they look at their child's potential value, not their utilitarian value.

To see the potential makes Victorious Love possible, and the Lord imparts this ability to everyone who begins a love relationship with Him. To Believers He says,

From now on we recognize no one according to their past failures... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things died; and look! New things have come! All these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through the King and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:16-18

"The ministry of reconciliation" is the spark that sets Victorious Love on fire in other people's lives. "He reconciled us" is the way Victorious Love began in a Believer's life, and it's the way we can launch Victorious Love in other people's lives – no matter how ruined the relationship or person may be. Knowing this potential, "we recognize no one according to their past failures..." it says.

1. Victorious Love works on the basis of someone's potential value, not utilitarian value or present value.

Reconciliation goes beyond forgiveness. People say to "forgive and forget," which means moving on and moving away from people they've forgiven – leave the bad memories behind. Reconciliation begins with forgiveness and then builds *a new, reconciled relationship!*

2. Victorious Love reconciles alienated people, clearing the way to build into the potential value of the other person and the relationship.

A young degenerate was changed through reconciliation by two old ladies practicing Victorious Love. After working for months to pull him out of his drug-stained lifestyle, helping him find a respectable job, he rewarded their work with a 3:30 AM phone call announcing he'd

taken too many drugs and could not possibly show up at his new job. The old ladies drove down to his inner-city apartment, helped him call in sick to work. They also cleaned up his apartment, which was a pigstye. Fungus grew in the kitchen sink piled full of dirty dishes neglected for six months. Why? They not only forgave him, they reconciled him – loving based on his potential, despite his failures. That young degenerate became a successful family man with a beautiful wife and three sons who loved him as they grew up, and so many others were touched by this ex-degenerate as he too practiced Victorious Love. That degenerate authored this book.

Building Significance

Human significance is astounding, not simply because God's Word says so. In practice when God's love dwells in human hearts everything changes. The significance God imparts through sacrificial love was most evident when He took on human form, suffering human indignities and eventually death. This moment in history opened the era of the New Promise, where His Victorious Love raises humans above all others in Creation, across "the heavenlies." Paul goes on describing this elevation in glorious terms ...

... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places (*Ephesians 1:18-20*)

It describes an avalanche of advantages the Lord gave to humankind, upending the natural order of Creation. Taken together, they describe an outcome which is amazingly victorious, "equal to the working of the strength of His might." The Lord's Victorious Love is "the strength of His might."

The greatest demonstration of Victorious Love during the billions of years of history of all Creation was "brought about in Christ," which is nailed to one objective fact – "when He raised Him from the dead," it says. So, he is now "seated at His right hand in the heavenly places." JC's life was not only victorious, it was a human life, which has an astonishing implication – namely, the Creator God associated Himself with humankind so intimately, *He became a member of humankind forever!* It was not merely a visit from God. He tethered himself

irrevocably to humankind, where human tragedies became the Lord's tragedies. Also, it means *the Lord's victories are now human victories*.

This raises a personal question – *how can anyone so disadvantaged (like me) be so victorious (like JC)?* Looking at my life, I can easily see my disadvantages. What's questionable is the big, victorious outcome The Book says demonstrates “the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.” What does this mean? Quite simply, understanding my victorious future means looking at JC, which demonstrates what the Lord can do with me – it's the same as what “He brought about in Christ.”

The natural tendency is to dismiss any correlation between “me and JC” because “I am far more disadvantaged than he was.”

Consider first how JC lived as a human. He experienced the worst of the worst of human tragedies. He certainly was born impoverished and he was a Jew, a sub-human to the Roman overlords ruling Palestine. Even among Jews, JC was lowdown, Hillbilly-Trash, with a hillbilly twang, from the remote hills of Galilee. Then among Galileans, JC was known as a lowdown bastard, adopted by Joseph the carpenter when he married JC's scandalous mom. But then Joseph died young, so JC had to do the carpentry work and feed the family. For someone so impoverished and racially defective, without pedigree, a blue-collar carpenter who eventually raised a bunch of hillbilly followers—what were the chances this low-down, scumbag could rise about his fate in life? He was hated and hounded by the Jewish elite and then executed as an innocent man in a torturous and shameful manner.

So, as a human, the Lord shared in the tragedies of racism, poverty, extreme torture and injustice which plague humankind. And all this was voluntary. *Why did he do it?*

By walking among us, by sacrificing His rightful position and throne of power over all Creation, JC demonstrated how the Lord's love is, by definition, Victorious Love. He not only overcame the worst human condition; he overcame the greatest tragedy of human life, which is death. This victory, “He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead...”

Focusing on the tragedies of life is an endless pursuit. And useless.

What really matters and makes a difference is to understand JC's Victorious Love. With all the tragedy, what mattered is not how he eliminated human tragedy, but how his Victorious Love altered the outcome. This is the guaranteed outcome. It is the Lord's eternal declaration:

■ Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8)

Is there room for any misinterpretation? Is it an ambiguous declaration? Is it doubtful? The only way to deny that "love never fails" is to deny the Lord's Word and deny the Lord ever lived or was resurrected from the dead! To deny all that means humankind is alone, thrashing in a savage jungle of random danger. The declaration comes is demonstrably, historically true. When the Lord preserved four different accounts of his life, he preserved a blueprint for living victoriously through Victorious Love. So, "the hope of His Calling" means...

3. Victorious Love never fails.

Consider the elevation of humankind above all Creation—truly, a demonstration of Victorious Love. It was no small work of the Lord. It changed the natural order of Creation. First, it required the "surpassing greatness of His power," and the "working of the strength of His might," Paul said, and then describes the tremendous victory that follows...

...These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might, which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Christ at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under Christ's feet and gave Christ headship over all things through the *ecclesia*, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:19-23)

It is a mouthful, but it says over and over that Jesus is supreme over all Creation, right? The kicker is that the Lord brought humans into His supremacy over all Creation. That is Victorious Love. The Administration stands on the shoulders of His supremacy, but this time Paul called it "His Body", which is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Whatever else that means, it certainly means *the Lord's love brings victory* into an otherwise defeated human

existence, despite our weakness and lowliness. This leads into the first practical understanding of Victorious Love:

4. Victorious Love **depends** on the one who loves, not the one who receives love.

God's Victorious Love depends on the greatness of the Lord's character, not the weakness of human character. For example,

While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (*Romans 5:6*)

While humans were weak and “*helpless*”—and completely worthless to the Lord—at that time *The King of the Lord's Rescue* sacrificed his life “for the *ungodly*.”

Ungodly people are worthless to the Lord. Repulsive. Yuk. Ungodly people look to God like inhuman people look to humans—creepy, heartless, brutal, callous, cruel people are inhuman savages who must be avoided. Like Hitler. Stalin. God's list of complaints against “the ungodly” is extensive. The Lord never created anything so repulsive. Far from it. As the Lord created humans, they were highly compatible with God, so “I might dwell in them and walk among them.” But now, every living human is greatly polluted with serious attitude issues, complaints and rebellious attitudes. Human character is simply “ungodly”, which means “the opposite of Me,” the Lord says. “And they're helpless to be otherwise,” so deep it goes. “Ungodly” carries a strong moral and ethical connotation, so people are like filthy, dirty scumbags to the Lord. Put another way,

For all of us have become like one who is unclean {*like lepers, grotesque, monstrous, sickly*}, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities {*guilt, shame*}, like the wind, take us away. (*Isaiah 64:6*)

For the Lord to deal with us, it means:

While we were enemies, we were reconciled to the Lord through the death of His Son (*Romans 5:10*)

Victorious Love *reconciles* the gap between the one who loves and the one being loved, even when the recipient is an enemy. How is this reconciliation possible? “Through the death of”

the one who practices Victorious Love. “The ungodly” can’t change, so “the godly” changes *through death*.

Reconciliation is the opposite of the love we learned, growing up. Normally, an enemy must first drop the enmity and only then is it possible to love that person. It makes sense, but that approach is not victorious. It leads to bitterness and a long list of alienated, failed relationships. Expecting the other person to change first results in defeated love, since it puts the question of victory in the other person’s hands. *When my enemy becomes responsible for my victory*, it’s a sad day.

5. Victorious Love means taking ownership of personal relationships.

Without Victorious Love, relationships with others are only possible when others are agreeable, not disagreeable, and only while others remain agreeable. Depending on someone else’s response is a recipe for defeat, not victory. For this reason, people bounce from one relationship to another all lifelong, searching for someone who “treats me right,” someone who meets certain expectations, someone else to initiate a victorious relationship.

Extreme Victory

Here lies the great demarcation between The King of the Lord’s Rescue and all other holy or wise men, the philosophers, prophets, or heroes in history—nobody ever said what JC said:

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (*Matthew 5:44*)

After the New Promise first appeared, copycat religions sprouted all over the place, and it continues especially today with *Postmodern Secularism* – derisively called “Political Correctness” – which attempts to emulate the kindness of the Lord’s Rescue without going the distance JC went. Counterfeits sound loving, quoting “The Golden Rule,” as JC said, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” but going no further. Who are those “others” we should “do unto”? JC taught “others” *includes enemies*. Nobody, nowhere on this planet taught “love your enemies” as a maxim, except JC. To be precise, it means:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink." (*Romans 12:20*)

What a foolish, impractical way to deal with enemies! What a guarantee of failure, not victory! It makes no sense. Imagine the French greeting the Nazi invasion with a buffet of fine cuisine and refreshments! Mahatma Gandhi claimed to base his peaceful resistance

Yet, "love your enemies" is everywhere in the Lord's Word—the Romans 12 citation came from Proverbs 25, written a millennium earlier. It's the only way to explain why JC said, as Roman soldiers nailed him to the cross, "Father, forgive them!" It also explains why Jesus was exalted, "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come." Jesus defeated all his enemies and all resistance in Creation through the power of Victorious Love.

This extreme victory describes how the Lord accomplishes The Summing Up of All Things through His Administration, which is "His Body" on earth—through lowly humans like us. It sounds impossible because it is impossible, by any human means. Which leads to the next, vital principle:

6. Victorious Love is the product of **spiritual growth**.

This is a monumental fact. It's vital for understanding spiritual growth, which is measured not by arbitrary, ethical standards, as if a spiritual life is a rule-oriented life. Rather, increased capacity to share the Lord's love signals authentic spiritual growth. Self-righteous, judgmental, uptight Christians obviously don't understand this basic fact, but Victorious Love is the direct result of a close relationship with the Lord:

We love because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love the Lord," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love the Lord whom he has not seen. (*1 John 4:19-20*)

All biblical ethics are *Love Ethics*, not *religious* ethics, and the difference is huge. Religious ethics produce judgmental, harsh relationships. Love Ethics draw people closer together. Religious ethics are human-engineered, compatible with human strength, but the Lord's

Love Ethics go far beyond human competency. Like the ability to love an enemy, this supernatural love ability comes from the Lord's deep, spiritual work in the human heart.

This hope *{new direction}* does not disappoint, because the love of the Lord has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5)

Loving enemies is risky in countless ways, like getting used up, dominated, enslaved, hurt, destroyed... Enemies are exceptionally untrustworthy! It's difficult enough to allow spouses or friends dig through our layers of defenses, but who allows enemies to stroll around inside our hearts? Yet, with Victorious Love it is possible to love enemies. "This new direction does not disappoint," the Lord said, because "the love of the Lord has been poured out within our hearts."

The Lord says, "I've got your back!" He promises to fix what others damage, *if we simply follow the Lord's leadership into Victorious Love!* Notice that caveat, however – without Victorious Love, there is no victorious life. As the Lord's Word promises:

the Lord causes all things to work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

First, notice the caveat, "to those who love the Lord," which again points to Victorious Love. Second, notice the dark pitfall awaiting a naïve bypass of that caveat – things might not work out so well. A tragedy might simply end up tragic, *even for Believers*. Romans 8:28 is the second-most often misquoted scripture, like, "the Lord causes all things to work together for good—period!" Not! Nominally religious people misquote it while grasping ambiguous comfort in tragic times. Bob Dylan is not a Bible scholar, but even he could see it, "As if the Lord is just an errand boy to satisfy your wandering desires!" Tens of millions of naïve, tragedies-in-progress are floating around the USA with ambiguous, quasi-Christian beliefs like, "It's all part of the Lord's plan." Wrong. Scars and defeats are not the Lord's plan. Walking closer with the Lord, following His Calling, that is part of the Lord's plan, but only by permission. Sovereign, Free Will can block His preference.

"Those who are called according to His purpose" is a calling, a hope, a new direction from God leading to victorious *outcomes*, not necessarily victorious *moments*. The deeper the

relationship goes with the Lord, following His Calling, the more He leads to *extreme victory*. This means means *nobody can hurt me more than the Lord can love me*.

Put another way:

What then shall we say to these things? If the Lord is for us, who is against us? (*Romans 8:31*)

Through the Lord's Calling, "this hope" turns monstrous enemies into real people whose monstrosities are overcome by Victorious Love. *The Lord's Calling turns victims into victors*. It does not happen overnight. It is not a rule. It is not burdensome. It is a spiritual process, a spiritual capability that naturally grows, "because the love of the Lord" was "poured out within our hearts."