

From Paul's eschatological perspective, we are already citizens of the heavenly order of reality. Our *citizenship in heaven* is not based upon wishful thinking of an imagination of future possibilities, but on *the righteousness that comes from God*. By God's judicial decision we belong to the heavenly community.

Paul's use of the word emphasizes the membership of Christians in the heavenly kingdom governed by Christ. Our governing power, our executive authority is in heaven. The implication of asserting our citizenship in the heavenly state is that we are a "colony of heavenly citizens" here on earth.⁵

There are numerous verses and passages in Scripture that clearly present the truth that salvation and eternal life are attainable by means of faith alone in Christ alone. Here's one:

Ephesians 2:8 For by means of grace [instrumental of χάρις (*cháris*): the policy of divine integrity] you have been completely and permanently saved [nominative masculine plural of the intensive perfect past participle of σώζω (*sōzō*): the result of a finished action] through faith [ablative feminine singular of πίστις (*pístis*)]; and even this [nominative neuter singular of οὗτος (*hoútos*): subject of *sōzō*: "saved" and refers back to : "salvation," which is not found a second time in the verse but represented by the pronoun *hoútos*] **is not from the source of yourselves, the free gift is from the source of God;**

v. 9 not as a result of works that no man should boast. (EXT)

The permanence and immutability of salvation establishes an eternal future for every believer. Whatever circumstances confront an individual, his personal sense of destiny becomes a problem-solving device to stabilize his mentality.

⁵ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians in The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, gen. ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 268–69.



Even the most dread diseases, the most horrific accidents, or most debilitating injuries are only temporary when compared to life eternal in heaven in an interim or resurrection body. Those in the best of health will gladly exchange their human, sin-ridden bodies for the perfection of the eternal state.

7. **Personal Love for God:** Precedence for believers' personal love for God is the principle that God loved us first:

1 John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

His love for us is based on His integrity which is made up of the composites of Righteousness and Justice which attributes are certified by divine omniscience, the fact that God knows all that is knowable and there has never been any fact that has escaped His notice from eternity past to eternity future. Omniscience in essence is what underwrites the Divine Decree.

If divine integrity is the love of God, then human love for God must acquire standards from the Word of God in order to develop personal love for Him.

If God's policy in the function of His integrity is grace, then our love for Him and ultimately for others must be based on grace as well.

All believers are recipients of the love of God. However, that love is expressed by His integrity which must coordinate with righteousness and justice in his dealings with fallen people.

Therefore, the love of God is expressed in two ways, blessing the believer for compliance with His plan and discipline for noncompliance.

Therefore, personal love for God is not possible except through consistent inculcation, retention, and application of His Word in the life of the believer.

This is the only way God can be the target of a believer's personal love. It is not accomplished by emotionalism, by warm and fuzzy feelings, or by announcements proclaiming one's love for Him.

It is only by the development of personal integrity, learned, facilitated, and applied toward Him. Integrity is a virtue that develops over time by adjusting one's soul inventory so that it coalesces with the righteousness of God.

If this is true, and I assert it is, then it requires each believer to grow in grace. This growth must be built on the inculcation of mandates and doctrines that reveal principles of His immutable righteousness.

Whatever the Word of God communicates with an imperative mood, through illustrations of divine decision-making, or biblical episodes that display divine policies, then these are standards the believer must adopt and under the filling of the Holy Spirit emulate.

Therefore, for a believer to advance to the level of personal love for God, he must have invested the time to discover the attributes that define divine integrity.

Until a believer establishes a foundation of personal love for God, he cannot effectively or consistently produce unconditional love for his fellow man.

Personal love for God is accomplished when the believer realizes that he must learn Who God is before He can properly love Him.

God reveals Himself in His Word. His Word, its policies, its mandates, and its guidelines are reflections of His righteousness standards. If God is perfect, and He is, then His standards are perfect. If His standards are perfect then he loves us from the source of that perfection.

Therefore, the integrity of God is the love of God. If we can acquire guidance from His perfect standards, then we can appropriate those standards in our personal analysis of determining Who He is.

He is Righteous—absolutely perfect. He is Justice—absolutely fair. He is omniscient—absolutely all-knowing. He functions on grace—absolutely gracious.

Question? When such attributes are discovered, does that lead to honor, respect, and admiration for Who He is? If, “Yes,” then are you inclined to gravitate toward such an individual as someone who can be trusted?

The more you learn about the integrity of God the more you develop a personal love for God. The Integrity of God is the resource for the love of God.

When believers acquire divine standards of righteousness from their exposition from Scripture, they develop personal integrity themselves.

From that resource, they develop personal love for God. From that virtue of personal integrity toward God, then they are enabled to apply unconditional love toward the human race with emphasis on those who are members of the royal family of God.

(End JAS2-23. See JAS2-24 for continuation of study at p. 231.)



8. **Unconditional Love for Mankind:** There are two words for love in the New Testament, the verbs: (1) ἀγαπάω (*agapáō*) and (2) φιλέω (*phíleō*). *Agapáō* is the word used in the mandate to love everyone and is therefore unconditional, but does not become habitually operational until the believer advances to the sophisticated spiritual life and has facilitated personal love for God. *Phíleō* is used for a believer's soul rapport which is developed over time. This area of love requires personal virtue.

Personal love is directed toward God. There is a personal love that is restricted to a very small number of people: parents, siblings, spouse, children, grandchildren, extended relatives, and exceptionally close friends, but this is better classified as familial love.

Agapáō is the functional love of the Christian that when developed enables him to accept all people as they are. It is actually Christian professionalism that is maintained by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The relaxed mental attitude of the believer toward his human characteristics is necessary for him to deal with those same characteristics of others. Race seems to be a big thing today and is the source of a great deal of animosity in our society.

On a human level, we had no say—so in what we are physically. We are who we are by virtue of genetics. The physical you is virtually unchangeable unless you start to dicker with it.

Some are of a certain race and sometimes that is indicated by skin color. Some have blond, brown, black, or red hair; blue, brown, green, or hazel eyes. Some people are tall some short. Some weigh in at 300-pounds some at 100 even. The makeup and characteristics of the human body are never an issue with regard to one's relationship with other people.

What is an issue is how they think. And how they think is completely based on how they have chosen to use their volition. Some are bad and some are good; some are kind and some are inconsiderate; some are heathen and some are saved. Some have a Progressive inventory of ideas. Some have establishment viewpoint. Some believers are advanced spiritually while others are not.

It is the problem-solving device of unconditional love toward all mankind that enables every believer to associate with anyone with a relaxed mental attitude. It emphasizes the virtue of the subject rather than the attraction of the object.

Unconditional love is directed toward all mankind and is the ultimate expression of humility and objectivity.

Unconditional love as a problem-solving device is commanded in all dispensations under one phrase, “Love those in your periphery as yourself.” We have spent a goodly amount of time amplifying this commandment with this expanded translation:

James 2:8 If [**protasis of a 1st-class condition**] you apply the Royal Law according to the Scripture, “You shall unconditionally love from personal integrity those you encounter,” [**apodosis**] honorably, you must keep on doing this. (EXT)

We have established the principle that the Royal Law cannot be consistently executed until the believer advances to the level of personal love for God after which he develops the spiritual inventory to manage others with virtue, honor, and especially, personal integrity.

It is the acquisition of standards from the righteousness of God that provides the inventory from which one applies the biblical standards required to execute the Royal Law.

In the growth process, personal volition must take guidance from the justice of God in one’s relationship with others. Righteousness demands righteous application. Justice demands that righteous standards be always applied in one’s relationship with others.

When there is an advanced inventory of ideas in the soul, the believer is enabled to have a relationship with other believers without being judgmental, critical, scolding, argumentative, or disapproving of them.

Principle: If you are not responsible for the behavior of the people you encounter, then you do not have divine authorization to intrude with verbal or physical admonishments.

Instead, you are commanded to, “love from personal integrity those you encounter.”