

Lifestyle of Learning™
Thoughts on Love's Actions
Part 1
Transcript—15 pages

Marilyn Howshall: Thank you, Lord. Thank you, ladies, for joining with us today. We're really happy to be able to get together with you today on the line. We have a special discussion for you today. This is Marilyn Howshall with Lifestyle of Learning™, and I know you are aware that I have with me my friend, and co-laborer, Barbie Poling. You may be familiar with Barbie's Love's Actions Seminars. Our discussion today is based on those and the small book *Love's Actions* that accompanies my book, *Empowering the Transfer of Moral Values and Faith*. Love's Actions, I think is a unique idea in that it is helping moms see their true unloving behaviors toward their children which rob them of peace in the home and cause them to lose positive influence with their children. Also to just help them connect more to the Gospel message of what the Lord wants to do in us through reconciliation.

The message of Love's Actions is really, really practical. It will help bring conviction and give you many steps to take with your spouse and your children that will heal the heart of your relationships. We have a discussion for you today about some Love's Actions that are not included in Barbie's seminars. Throughout our discussion, we think you will hear things you have never heard before, even those of you who have gone through the Love's Actions Seminars already. We hope this discussion will bless you, encourage you, and serve to propel you further toward the loving reconciliation and healing that God wants for your family relationships.

Before we begin our discussion, Barbie and I thought you might be interested to know a little bit of background about how the idea of Love's Actions came into being. We'll also be hearing from a few moms who are on the line with us today who are wanting to share a little bit of their testimony regarding Love's Actions. We have a full schedule of wonderful discussion, testimony, and content for you today and hope you are really going to enjoy this. Of course, for LOLACHE members, you'll get to hear this again later on.

Barbie, I'm going to let you take the lead from there while we do a little reminiscing.

Barbie Poling: Marilyn and I were talking about the process we went through over time before I ended up developing the Love's Actions Seminars. It actually started many years ago. I remember that I had not known Marilyn for very long, maybe just a couple of years before I recognized that she was working on the writing of a book which eventually became, or part of it became, *Empowering the Transfer of Moral Values and Faith*.

MH: Yes, it was too big of a big and I had to cut that thing in half. The other half is mostly written but just isn't published.

BP: Right, and I remember that as Marilyn was working on her book, she had a collection of verses that she was calling Love's Actions. You had been working on that list for quite sometime, right Marilyn?

MH: Yes, I had been combing the Scriptures for verses that were very specific to a loving action that demonstrated a loving action. I had collected up references but without typing out the Scriptures. I was doing this by hand, of course.

BP: You weren't using a computer.

MH: No.

BP: It was all by hand.

MH: It was all by hand. I had gone back through trying to assign a phrase to each reference that summarized it for me. I had only gone through a few books doing that piece of it when you got in on it. You thought it was a great idea. I wanted an appendix at the back of my book. That discussion can be for another time, but my deep motivation was to really help shine a light on what the Gospel really says how we are supposed to be living our lives for God. Just for some reason seems to escape the church at large what the Christian life is about. Barbie, you took over that assignment for yourself, and you began combing the Scriptures and finished up my task for me, which was a huge task in itself, gathering up all of those Scriptures. Then assigning some sort of order to them.

BP: Yes, I remember as you had that list, the parts of it that I saw, I realized it was much bigger than the parts I was seeing at the time. But the parts of it that I saw had verses from several New Testament books and I started to think what about the other books in the New Testament? They must have verses that point to specific loving actions, so I started with Thessalonians, and thought surely Thessalonians must talk about love's actions because...

MH: I remember pointing you to the last books, because I had started at the beginning and I wanted you to pick up there.

BP: I was going through them and just picking out verses that were about loving actions. When you understand the Christian life is about love, and learning how to love, loving much and loving well, you can see that the Scripture is completely full of verses about love. Before I understood that about the Gospel and the Christian life, I didn't really see how much the Scripture was about love. But once I was searching for it and looking for it, it was just overwhelming how many verses talk about love and loving actions.

MH: Then we began having local meetings outside of our own little couple's group that we had going for a couple years. We started opening up to more families and we had secured a church building to meet in for weekly meetings. We didn't want to spend a lot of time trying to figure out what in the world to teach. Barbie had the idea that here we've got all of these Scriptures already gathered up about love's actions. Why don't we just do one a week?

BP: Right and we concluded that we could talk about one verse about love every week and we would not run out.

MH: Right we would not run out.

BP: At that time, we were thinking through kind of a format that we could use for meetings, and the format at the time was to talk about a verse in the Bible that was a command to love and then talk about a verse in the Bible that showed a motivation, a reason, to be loving, then to talk about a specific love's action. Basically that's the format we decided for our meetings at that time was the same format that I used to give the Love's Actions Seminar messages. Then to go on to talk about one specific love's action and what it looks like in real relationships.

MH: Yes, with your spouse, with your children, and between siblings.

BP: That's right. So at the time, I started to assemble a couple of separate lists of Scripture references that fit those categories that specifically gave a command to love, and then another list that specifically gave a motivation, a reason, to love in them. I remember that as we assembled those lists, everyone in our community was looking over these lists and that my husband, particularly, was shocked. He was shocked that there were so many verses that commanded us to love. He had already become aware that it was the goal and the purpose of the Christian life to learn how to love, but he was actually shocked by how many verses there are.

MH: Jim was doing the same thing actually. He had gone into the Old Testament. He wanted to know what the Old Testament said about love. He already knew that the Bible is all about love, but he couldn't believe that the whole Old Testament is just evidence after evidence that God's message of love is there. He concluded that the Bible is all about God's love for us and how He wants us to live our lives, just like Jesus summarized in the two commandments: to love God with your whole heart and your neighbor as yourself. The problem with that idea, of course, is that we don't know what love is and yet when we come into receiving God's love for us, we come to see just how much love or unlove impacts our lives for either good or bad and how much love or unlove influences every thought, word, and deed in our life. We knew that we had landed on an idea that really needed to be expanded upon for a good long period of time.

MH: I was really thrilled when Barbie decided to pick it up again and do the Love's Actions Seminars for our readers over the internet, people coming around our ministry outside of our community, and they've been really, really popular. We've been happy with the response to them. We've done 13, isn't that right?

BP: Yes, there are 12, but one of them had so much to say about it that it's divided up into two, so there are actually 13 audios but 12 love's actions that are described.

MH: And each one describes a character quality from Scripture, and of course, there could be hundreds of these sorts of seminars, only we won't be doing that. We're hoping to inspire you to do your own, because that is where your insight from the Lord and the changes at the heart level come to you, is when you're connecting with the Lord in your own word study. We're just paving the way for you to do it and see how it's done. It's a powerful way to go about doing a word study that is very, very practical and applicable to your real family needs.

BP: That's what we've been doing for the LOLACHE members, some word studies. I've been doing a word study on video so you can see how I go through the process of developing the Love's Actions messages. The purpose for showing you these things is so that you can do your own. You can take one of the Love's Actions words and do a word study on your own and come up with a lot of good understanding for things you need to stop doing and things you need to start doing to become loving.

MH: We ended up beginning each of our meetings back then, with the statement: *Love is the object, love is the purpose, and love is the goal of the Christian life.* We began categorizing the Scriptures a bit more, separating them (Not the Scriptures themselves) between works of the actions of the flesh versus the actions of the spirit. Barbie began creating documents for those by combining definitions with common parenting practices. Is that what you're doing there? I think I was saying it a little wrong.

BP: Well, I had taken so many Scriptures that tell us what love looks like, but there is also a huge number of Scriptures that tell us what is not love, and what the flesh looks like, what selfishness and wickedness and weakness in the flesh looks like. We had been taking some of the words in those kinds of lists as well, words such as despised and hatred and ...and anger and shame, and all those that are listed out as things that are not actions of love. I was putting a little bit of a definition to them and writing out some common parenting practices that were in line with those unloving activities. Then at the same time, I was taking some of the love's actions and doing the same, developing descriptions of what it would look like for a parent to be kind, to be gentle, to be peaceful, all the things we know are connected with loving actions. As Marilyn was completing her *Empowering the Transfer of Moral Values and Faith* book, we were going to include some of these lists and some of these descriptions in the appendix.

MH: Yes, and I changed my mind about that. It was too much. It needed to be a separate little booklet. So we have the two now: *Love's Actions* booklet, a companion to *Empowering the Transfer of Moral Values and Faith*. If you haven't read *Empowering the Transfer of Moral Values and Faith*, I just want to say that to really understand what God wants to do in your heart and to understand morality and the law of love, then read that book. It's very helpful to reveal what it is God wants to do in our lives. It also has Barbie's testimony in there of a wonderful period of time when she began ministering to her mom and her mom came to the Lord and was set free of a life of the flesh before she went home to be with the Lord. It is a powerful testimony of God's mercy and grace to reach to somebody who is in an advanced stage of Alzheimer and love her through her own daughter. It's a real wonderful testimony. A lot of that is in the book, and it's also in the audio testimonies that accompany that.

Did you want to get people on the line next? Or did you want to discuss Scriptures next? How did you want to proceed?

BP: We wanted to get some testimonies from people who have been listening to the Love's Actions Seminars and so we have a few volunteers who would be willing to get on the line with us and give us some testimonies. Our friend Catherine said she couldn't be on the line later, so we wanted to get her on the line before she needs to go. Catherine, can you hear me, are you there

Catherine: Yes, I am.

MH: Hi Katherine.

Catherine: Hi there, Marilyn. Thank you.

MH: Thank you for getting on the line with us.

BP: We'd love to hear your testimony of Love's Actions, of the book or seminar, or one particular one and how it's impacted your life.

Catherine: When you had posted about giving a testimony, I thought oh my goodness, which one will I pick?....so much. I've highlighted the death out of them. I think the one I want to focus on and the one I think has shifted my thinking the most and helped me is the Love's Action of Understanding. I was much more focused on issues with my children, with my husband, with others before beginning to see what understanding was. I'm just going to say a couple of the things that really stood out to me about this one and why they did.

Catherine: One of them was to not be offended when someone doesn't take an interest in my interest. That was something that had been somewhat of a pattern of mine. If my husband or friend weren't really taking an interest in what I had interests in, it was offensive to me. I felt that they didn't love me—huge assumptions about these things. In studying through Understanding, I began to realize all of that was about me and I was expecting them to come along side me without any understanding of what they were going through or what things they were interested in or why that wouldn't be important to them.

Also, another one that was kind of hand in hand, was not jumping to conclusions without seeking to understand. This was also a big pattern of mind where I made assumptions about how people acted at me. If a friend of mine didn't speak to me at a shower or party, then I automatically started assuming things, that they were mad at me or that I had said something to offend them. I just made a lot of assumptions about it. Sometimes I would even get mad back with this imaginary madness that they had. I would get angry at them and just kind of withdraw myself from relationship even though I had no idea if they were mad at me or not. I was just making that assumption. I wasn't seeking to understand where they were or what was happening with them.

The Lord, through this Love's Action, and probably a lot of other things too, but I really feel that with understanding the Love's Action Seminar, because of going over it and over it, I feel it's what's kind of penetrated, or the Lord has used it to penetrate. I was supposed to lay down all my self-centered thoughts that were on me and have more of an understanding of others around me and not make assumptions without asking questions or at least giving a chance, and definitely not be offended by their actions, because I don't know where they are coming from. My role is to love them, not to be offended. I was going to give a few examples of things that happened recently. I'll tell you what happened and how it would have looked a while ago.

I was actually teaching a week ago and my oldest daughter who is in college right now didn't make it to church that morning. She accidentally slept in and I didn't know that, but I knew she wasn't there. I didn't really think much about it, but she came home that afternoon and I didn't say a word to her about it, but she came up to me not long after she got home, and just said, "Mom, I am so sorry that I didn't make it this morning to hear you. I overslept, and I'm really sorry about that." I just hugged her and said, "That's fine. I overslept too. People oversleep. I didn't think anything about it." I could honestly say that I hadn't. Now a year ago, I would have been completely offended, maybe about two years ago or a year and a half.

MH: That's cute, it's kind of hard to track growth. There is so much overlapping, isn't there?

Catherine: But I would have been completely offended at that. I would have seen it as disrespectful, unthoughtful. I would have been very uncivil to her when she came in the house. If she apologized for it, I would have made her pay. I would have treated her without understanding, meaning it wasn't okay. I wouldn't have engaged with her. All of those things were very different now.

MH: Thank you, Lord.

BP: Yes, Thank you, Lord.

MH: That is so good. Thank you, Lord.

Catherine: I was thinking of another one that is kind of a weird one but I feel like it should be said. My son just turned 13 and is our youngest. I have a really bad habit of baby talking and when I say baby talking I mean, "Oh come here, you're so cute." I'm not giving a good example of it, but it's not talking to a person like I would talk to a friend, but like talking to a young child. I do this and for me it's an endearment. I was feeling like I was doing it to show love, but eventually, I began to realize there was a resistance to me when I use that tone of voice or when I use types of talking. When I began to investigate that, I felt the Lord helped me see that what was happening was I was still relating that was for him, he didn't feel accepted for where he was now. I was only looking at him as the little person and not the 13-year-old that he is now. I had to stop doing that and catch myself from doing that. Not that there is anything wrong with baby talking, necessarily. But in this particular instance, loving him was treating him at the age he was at and being understanding of that at times it was very demeaning to be talked down to like that. That is something I would have probably thought it was silly, because he's my kid. I get to talk to him how I want to. Or that's silly that bothers him. I'm his mom. I can talk that way. It was very much about what I wanted to do rather than considering what would be understanding of him and where he's at in life.

Then there was one other thing I was going to say in regards to my husband. This just stuck out to me because I felt like the Lord got my attention that this would not have gone this way awhile back, but there was a point where he was asking me something about housework. Maybe if the dishes were done in the dishwasher. I'm trying to remember the exact scenario, I lost my train of thought, but it was something along the lines of it could have been several ways. I could have taken it that he was saying I hadn't done something right or I hadn't gotten things done. Instead I just asked him what exactly was he trying to figure out. I don't know what you mean by his question. He said he was just trying to figure out how he could help. A while back, I wouldn't have taken the time to ask. I would have just assumed he was calling me a failure and I would have reacted in anger and probably would have said something like, "You don't do such and such either." And then been very unkind and kind of attacked him but in reality he was trying to help.

Catherine: I completely would have misunderstood him and not sought to know where he was going with it and not seeking to assume the best of him. I usually assumed the worst of everyone. I feel like with understanding I assume I don't know what's going on with them or I assume the best and I'm not going to take on an offense about what they said or what they did.

MH: That's really good, Catherine, to learn how to assume that. If you don't know, give the benefit of the doubt. Ask questions. It's really simple isn't it?

Catherine: It really is, but it's amazing how little I did that. That was not my go to.

BP: I'll bet these changes you're making in your life toward becoming an understanding person and becoming loving in this way have really changed your relationships with your kids. I can imagine if that is what you used to do most all the time, you probably had done some damage with your relationships. Are you seeing those things turn around, now?

Catherine: I am seeing improvement. I feel like I still have a long way to go to repair those relationships, but I definitely have seen, in fact the other morning, I started to get upset. I think the kids were running late. I was telling my sister the other day that I hadn't had that happen in so long and it really frustrated me that I took a step back in a way and really struggled with it. I reacted in anger and had to quickly turn around and apologize. The Lord was not allowing me to hold onto that anger. I noticed that right after that everybody just started talking normal. They started telling me more things. It surprised me that they didn't just assume that I was going to be mad for the rest of the ride or that I was not wanting to talk to them. There was something so redeeming about that because I realized that even though I made a mistake, they don't assume now that I'm going to continue in that or be angry with them or punish them.

BP: They are coming to trust you more, don't you think?

Katherine: Yes, yes.

BP: That's really good.

Catherine: Yes and that's very touching to hear you say that. I hadn't quite thought of it like that.

BP: Yes, that's the evidence that they are beginning to trust you more and beginning to believe that you're a different person than you used to be. Thank you, Lord.

Catherine: I thank the Lord and thank you, ladies, for you willing to be so honest and help us see things, at least me.

Catherine: I tried so hard to hide from myself and you all have said some things very honestly to me and even in all the programs and LOLACHE and these seminars, that you're not trying to tiptoe around the subject but come right out and say it. I definitely am very grateful now and it's taken awhile to see that that is beautiful.

MH: I know it is a beautiful thing, Catherine, when people's hearts are becoming pliable toward Him. It's just a beautiful, beautiful thing, so be encouraged, Katherine, as the Lord is working, and trust does rebuild. It sometimes rebuilds slowly and just depends, but you just keep obeying your conscience. You're doing really well and we appreciate you sharing with us today and being open the way you've been in sharing specific love's actions and how God is turning things around in your family. Thank you, Lord.

BP: Thank you, Catherine.

Catherine: You're welcome.

BP: We are going to have more testimonies in a little bit but we wanted to make sure and get Katherine in before she had to leave. Before we have more testimonies, we thought we'd talk with you about some Scripture passages. We were going to bring up a couple of passages from the *Love's Actions* book that we hadn't talked about specifically in the Love's Actions Seminars. One of the things that we noticed from Matthew 22 is that Jesus was answering the question somebody had asked, what is the most important commandment? Jesus had said, the most important commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and most important principle and first commandment, and the second is like it: You should love your neighbor as you do yourself. These two commandments sum up and upon them depend all the law and the prophets." So we know that from this passage that all the commandments and all that God wants for us, and everything God has for us is about love. Sometimes when people look at the Love's Actions versus, they say the word love is not in this verse. How can we say that about love when the word love is not in this verse?"

The reason we can say that all of the Lord's teachings are about love, is because that's what He said. He said all of it is summed up in loving the Lord and loving your neighbor. That is the sum of His teachings and everything He wants us to come to understand and come to know. That means that everything we're supposed to think and supposed to do as believers is about love. Also there are a lot of Scriptures, too, that are about being holy and about things that the Holy Spirit is showing us or teaching us. Since the word holy actually means purely loving. It means to be purely loving. We know that everything that is about holiness and everything that is coming from the Holy Spirit is all about love and becoming purely loving.

Do you have anything you wanted to add to those thoughts, Marilyn?

MH: Of course, the challenge is we don't know what it means to be purely loving. That's the challenge. The more you allow the Lord to work in your heart and the more you press into the reconciliation process that He has for you, the more you see the depth of your own sin. I see this on facebook all the time, in the H.E.M. group or making heart connections group or in LOLACHE where moms after a few months of devouring our messages and materials, that they come to see more deeply just how corrupt at the core of their being they really are. The Scripture is very clear that we all are. There is no good thing in us. That idea alone presents a challenge because we really do believe we are good people. We want good things. But want doesn't translate into being who we actually are and how we treat other people. Want just means that we are going to press forward to find some answers to receive from God to make the changes that need to be made in us because we can't do it on our own. We absolutely need God's power working in our life. We can't just modify our behavior and call it good. It doesn't work, because that ugly old stinking flesh rises up with no notice whatsoever on a regular basis. Of course, God's intention is to put that rotten old stinking flesh to death so that you are living above it and living an overcoming life receiving more and more of His love in your life, so you can pour it out toward others. This is walking with Christ. I could just go on and on and on on that topic.

I want you to get into the Scripture, Barbie, because it is so loaded, the passage that you chose, to discuss here from 1 John: 2: 3-11. Did you want to read this?

BP: Did you want to read all the way through it?

MH: Yes, I think you should read it. This is the Amplified version.

BP: I put it on the facebook page and I see that I have an error in the reference. I'm sorry about that.

And this is how we may discern [daily, by experience] that we are coming to know Him [to perceive, recognize, understand, and become better acquainted with Him]: if we keep (bear in mind, observe, practice) His teachings (precepts, commandments). Whoever says, I know Him [I perceive, recognize, understand, and am acquainted with Him] but fails to keep and obey His commandments (teachings) is a liar, and the Truth [of the Gospel] is not in him. But he who keeps (treasures) His Word [who bears in mind His precepts, who observes His message in its entirety], truly in him has the love of and for God been perfected (completed, reached maturity). By this we may perceive (know, recognize, and be sure) that we are in Him: Whoever says he abides in Him ought [as a personal debt] to walk and conduct himself in the same way in which He walked and conducted Himself. Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the message which you have heard [the] doctrine of salvation through Christ].

Yet I am writing you a new commandment, which is true (is realized) in Him and in you, because the darkness (moral blindness) is clearing away and the true Light (the revelation of God in Christ) is already shining. Whoever says he is in the Light and [yet] hates his brother [Christian, born-again child of God his Father] is in darkness even until now. Whoever loves his brother [believer] abides (lives) in the Light, and in it or in him there is no occasion for stumbling or cause for error or sin. But he who hates (detests, despises) his brother [in Christ] is in darkness and walking (living) in the dark; he is straying and does not perceive or know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

~1 John 2:3-11 Amplified Bible (AMP)

BP: That passage is loaded like Marilyn was saying.

MH: Yes, it's just loaded. You were bringing out some points from this passage, Barbie, and you were going to remark on at least one or two of them if we have time.

BP: Yes, I was going to try to do a little bit of what I do in the Love's Actions Seminar and that is to take a look at what the verse is saying and apply it to our relationships with out spouse and with our kids and the relationships between our children. I was going to go back up to the first two verses. They say, "This is how we may discern that we are coming to know Him." Basically, the verses are giving us the evidence of how we know that we know the Lord, and that we are becoming acquainted with Him and we are coming to know Him. The evidence is that we are observing and practicing His teachings, His precepts, and His commandments. We know from the other passages that we have that these precepts, these teachings, and these commandments are about learning how to love. They are about loving one another so it means that the evidence that we are coming to know him is in how we are treating the people in our lives. It really reminded me and it's an echo of what it says in 1 John 4. It's like an echo of these two verses. In 1 John 4, it says, "Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God. He who loves is born of God and is coming to know and understand God. He who does not love has not become acquainted with God and does not and never did know Him, because God is love. It's like an echo of these two verses that he who says that he recognizes and understands and is acquainted with God but fails to keep the commandments, but fails to be loving—because we know that's what the commandments are about—he does not have the truth of the Gospel in him.

I was thinking about how this comes out in our relationships because so many people tend to believe within their families that the way to come to know God is to do Bible studies and to memorize Bible verses and to attend church and to do some devotional curriculum at home and that is the method for coming to know God. There isn't anything wrong with those activities in themselves, but they are not the evidence of coming to know God as this verse shows us.

BP: The evidence of coming to know God is actually in the way we treat the people in our lives.

MH: Aligning ourselves correctly with the way God wants us to act. The process of reconciliation brings us to that place of correct alignment and that's where we are walking in the light, and that's where we end up with an occasion of stumbling in error, when we are actually walking in the light. Walking in the light in truth about ourselves, as much as walking in the light as to who God is and what He wants from us and who Jesus is and what He modeled for us and wants us to do.

BP: The way we can see those things working out in our relationship, for instance in our marriage—the evidence of being a godly spouse, a godly woman, or a godly man—the evidence is in how we love one another, not in how much they know about the Bible. The evidence is in preferring one another and selfless service toward one another and a deep level of treasuring one another as spouses. That would be the evidence of someone who is becoming more and more acquainted and progressively understanding God and knowing God. In our parenting as well, the evidence in our coming to know the Lord is how we love our children, so that means that the lack of love, like irritation, anger or shaming or yelling or neglecting or some of the things that Katherine had mentioned like assuming and being offended—those kind of activities are signs that we are not coming to know the Lord progressively and drawing closer to Him. The evidence of knowing Him is in the way we actually treat our children as parents, and between our children as well. The evidence of coming to know the Lord is in the way they are treating each other so that all the bickering, arguing, and unkindness and ignoring each other are all symptoms that our children are not coming to know the Lord. As you're considering how you are going to lead your children to the Lord, many believe that the way their children are going to come to know the Lord is through church attendance, church service, and Bible knowledge and Bible memorization or participation in devotional times. That is not how they are going to come to know the Lord, although there is nothing wrong with those activities. The way they are going to come to know the Lord is learning how to love each other.

I was going to keep going in this passage verses 5 and 6, “He who keeps and treasures His Word and observes His message in its entirety truly in him the love of God has been perfected and completed and by this we may perceive and know and recognize and be sure that we are in Him. Whoever says he abides in Him ought, as a personal debt, to walk and conduct himself in the same way that He walked and conducted Himself. This is another way in this passage of presenting the evidence of following His commands and knowing Him. A person who is following His commands and coming to know Him conducts himself with love and has become mature in the ways of love. Then in verses 7 and 8, I was thinking about these two verses—it says, “I am writing no new commandment.” But in verse 8, it says, “I am writing you a new commandment which is true because the darkness and moral blindness is clearing away.

BP: The true light, the revelation is already shining.” I was thinking about these two verses and how it is so true that when someone is walking in their flesh and their unloving ways, they actually can’t understand the ways of love. I experienced this with my own husband when I was first coming to understand much more about becoming loving and we were encouraging him to become loving as well and to give up the ways of his flesh and we talked to him about how he could go about doing that and I talked to him over and over at different times and different ways. I remember one time he had decided to actually obey his conscience and stop doing something unloving that he was doing and then I repeated what I had told him many times before, and he actually got a little upset with me and said, “Why didn’t you ever say that before? Why didn’t you ever tell me that before?” It was really interesting to me because I had told him so many times but he actually couldn’t hear it, and it was because of his moral blindness. Like it says in this passage, he actually couldn’t hear what I was saying as if I never said it. But as he began to be obedient to his conscience and began to be more loving, the moral blindness started clearing away and the true light and he began to have revelation about what I was saying. I was thinking about that if you are coming to understand a lot of truths and you are coming to see your own ways and coming to see how to be more loving in your family, and you’re trying to communicate that with your spouse or even with other people, don’t be surprised if they can’t actually seem to understand you. Because it’s not the words themselves that help them understand, it’s becoming obedient to the ways of love that helped them understand, and it’s the same within your parenting. As you are beginning to make these changes in your home and becoming more loving, don’t be surprised at all if you need to help your children understand over, and over, and over again; because there are so many times they can’t actually hear what you are saying. They can’t understand it until they begin to come to the place where they can cooperate with what you’re doing and you’ve won their heart enough. I hear that expressed within the H.E.M. discussions where at times people say, “I’ve let go of my unloving ways, but my kids just don’t seem to get it.” They become frustrated with their kids that they aren’t learning as fast as they think they should. But what’s really happening is your kids don’t understand yet and they need more and more love from you and more training from you. That seems to be what is being written in these two verses. He’s saying, “I know this isn’t a new commandment I’m giving you. You had this commandment from the beginning, but it is a new commandment to you because your moral blindness is clearing away.” Now they are able to hear these commands in a new way.

I was just going over the verses 7 and 8 of that same passage. Then verses 9, 10, and 11, “Whoever says he is in the light and yet says he hates his brother, is in darkness even until now, because whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in Him there is no occasion for stumbling or cause for error or sin, but he who hates his brother is in darkness and walking in the dark. He is straying and does not perceive or know where he is going because darkness has blinded his eyes.” From those passages, we can see that walking in the light means to be walking in love.

BP: You were saying something about that earlier, Marilyn, right? That there are many other passages in the New Testament that refer to walking in the light, so that's all about being loving, when you're seeing passages about walking in the light. This verse tells us that walking in the light is all about loving. It's interesting that part of verse 10 says that, "The one who loves his brother, in him there is no occasion for stumbling or cause for error or sin." What this verse tells us is there is a way for you to avoid stumbling and error.

MH: This is an interesting thought, because people will often assume that when we talk about living above sin or the overcoming life that that means you become sinless, so people take that gigantic leap of error in their thinking that you become sinless which is not even a possibility, because we are still human beings with a sin nature and predisposed towards sin, however we can live an overcoming life where we are living above it. God makes it really clear in the Scriptures, this being one of many passages that points to the possibility of not easily stumbling into sin, simply if we are walking in love. Of course, that love needs to be that love from the Father coming to us and living in us. It's not about our own love, it's not about human love, but about God's love operating in us through the Holy Spirit. When we are living rightly with the Lord, we have much less cause for stumbling into sin, into error, or fleshing out, and because we are walking in the light. We are receiving the light of the truth that the Holy Spirit gives us and we are acting on that light and truth, so we are walking in the light.

Of course, this is one Scripture, and there are others where it's very clear that to be perfect as Jesus is perfect and holy as He's holy; there are Scriptures about where we can be perfect in our lives, and it's only at the heart level where our hearts are fully turned toward God's love in our lives. This is the place where God wants to work in us where He wants to change us at the heart level to be perfect. There is no other place in our lives where we can be perfect. But there He says we can be perfect, at the heart level, if our heart is right with Him. The same way with holiness—Holiness is about love, and that is all it's about. We can be holy as Jesus is holy when we are loving. When Katherine was on the line a little bit ago and she indicated how changes and it's hard to remember some times when changes actually happen because of overlapping periods where you are growing and you're letting go of the flesh, and you're coming into more holiness in different areas of your life and sometimes there are just degrees of growth and layers of it. Sometimes it's just hard to pinpoint when that all happens, but the fact that you're all on a path with the Lord or turning your heart and allowing Him to work there, then you are on a holy path. If you are reconciling your heart and your actions to the Lord's ways, as you are on that path, you are made right with Him. You are reconciling to Him and He is reconciling your life. Whether you have cause for stumbling or you've got issues you're not aware of that you still have not addressed with the Lord, the fact that you are obeying Him in every area that He has shown you to obey Him in, puts you on a path or righteousness with Him and makes you right with Him.

MH: Simply praying the salvation prayer and saying that you're living your life for God and being the Christian and doing the Christian works isn't what makes us right with the Lord. It simply positions us to receive the work of righteousness that He has for us, to receive the work of holiness that He has for us and to receive the work of love that He has for us in all of our doings.

Barbie, I think we need to take a little break and cut the recording and come back.

BP: We're going to go ahead and cut the recording and we'll be silent for a little while, but we'll be back shortly in just a little bit, so don't leave, we'll be back.

To continue listening to this discussion, please go to [Thoughts on Love's Actions, Part 2](#).