Romans 8:27-28

Romans 8:27-God The Father Knows The Mind Of The Spirit Because The Spirit Intercedes For The Saints According To The Father’s Will

Romans 8:27 teaches that God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of the Father.

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“And” is the “epexegetical” use of the conjunction $de$ ($\delta \varepsilon$) (deh), which introduces a statement that “explains” Paul’s previous statement at the end of verse 26.

In Romans 8:26, Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit assists the Christian in his weakness because many times in adversity the Christian is totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with the will of the Father but the Spirit Himself intercedes for the Christian with inexpressible groanings.

Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”

Now, in Romans 8:27, Paul provides information regarding the Spirit’s intercession, which “explains” or “clarifies” how the Spirit’s intercession can be heard by the Father when this intercession is “with inexpressible groanings.”

Therefore, we will translate the conjunction $de$, “that is.”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“He who searches” is the articular nominative masculine singular present active participle form of the verb $ereunao$ ($\varepsilon \omicron \rho \omicron \eta \nu \alpha \omega$) (er-yoo-nah-o), which means, “to search diligently.”

It means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2, page 330).

The word does not appear in the Septuagint and only six times in the Greek New Testament. In John 5:39, the word is attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ who stated that the Jews “diligently searched” the Old Testament Scriptures because they thought that in them they could have eternal life when in fact trusting in Him whom the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of was the way to receive eternal life. It
appears in John 7:52 in Nicodemus’ defense of Jesus before fellow Pharisees who use *ereunao* when telling him to “diligently search” the Old Testament Scriptures in order that Nicodemus might see that no prophet is to come out of Galilee.

Paul uses the word in 1 Corinthians 2:10 where he teaches that the Spirit “diligently searches” all things, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 2:10, “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”

The verb appears in 1 Peter 1:11 where Peter teaches that the Old Testament prophets “diligently searched” the Scriptures seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

Lastly, *ereunao* appears in Revelation 2:23 where the word is attributed again to the Lord Jesus Christ when talking to the apostle John and reminding him that He “carefully searches” the minds and hearts of human beings.

In Romans 8:27, Paul uses the word in relation to the activity of the Father who “carefully searches” the heart of the Christian where the Spirit’s intercession takes place with inexpressible groanings.

The Father understands the Spirit’s intercession on behalf of the Christian even though this intercession is “with inexpressible groanings.” This verb speaks of the omniscience of the Father as well as the intimacy that is within the Trinity.

The fact that the Father searches the hearts of men is celebrated throughout the Scriptures.

1 Chronicles 28:9, “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”

1 Chronicles 29:17, “Since I know, O my God, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to You.”

Psalm 7:9, “O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds.”

Psalm 44:21, “Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.”

Proverbs 17:3, “The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests hearts.”

Jeremiah 11:20, “But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously, who tries the feelings and the heart, let me see Your vengeance on them, for to You have I committed my cause.”
Jeremiah 17:10, “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.”

Jeremiah 20:12, “Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart.”

Matthew 6:8, “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Acts 1:24-25, “And they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.’”

Acts 15:8, “And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4, “For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.”

Hebrews 4:12-13, “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. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Revelation 2:18-23, “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.””

In Romans 8:27, the definite article preceding the participle form of the verb ereunao functions as a substantiver meaning that it converts the participle into a substantive. Therefore, it indicates that the participle has a substantival function, which is reflected by translating the article with a relative pronoun phrase and since the verb is plural in number as well, we can translate the article “the one who.”
The present tense is a “gnomic present,” which is used for a general timeless fact or spiritual axiom, or an eternal spiritual truth. This indicates that the Father, “as an eternal spiritual truth” searches the heart of the Christian where the Spirit’s intercession on behalf of the Christian takes place with inexpressible groanings.

The active voice of the verb indicates that the subject is producing the action of the verb. This indicates that the Father, as the subject, produces the action of searching the heart of the Christian where the Spirit’s intercession on behalf of the Christian takes place with inexpressible groanings.

The participle form of the verb ereunao functions a “nominative subject” meaning that the subject, which is embedded in the verb and refers to the Father produces the action of searching the heart of the Christian where the Spirit’s intercession takes place on behalf of the Christian with inexpressible groanings.

Paul does not mention the Father explicitly but rather implicitly here for rhetorical effect in order to draw his readers into seeing how God has an intimate knowledge of them even though He is not explicitly mentioned.

We will translate ereunao, “the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“The hearts” is the articular accusative feminine plural form of the noun kardia (καρδία) (kar-dee-ah).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, page 213: (1) The heart; the heart, regarded as the seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire (2) The heart, as the seat of intellect (3) The heart, as the inner and mental frame (4) The conscience (5) The heart, the inner part, middle, centre.

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2 defines kardia: (1) The causative source of a person’s psychological life in its various aspects but with special emphasis upon thoughts – ‘heart, inner self, mind’ (page 321). (2) A location deep within a large area – ‘depths, far inside’ (page 715).

Johannes Behm lists the following New Testament meanings of the noun kardia (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 3, pages 611-613: (1) The thought of the heart as the central organ of the body and the seat of physical vitality is found only in Lk. 21:34 and the select poetic expressions of Acts 14:17. (2) That the heart is the centre of the inner life of man and the source or seat of all the forces and functions of the soul and spirit is attested in many different ways in the NT. (a) In the heart dwell feelings and emotions, desires, and passions, e.g. joy,
pain and sorrow, love, desire, of God; lust (b) The heart is the seat of understanding, the source of thought and reflection (c) The heart is the seat of the will, the source of resolves; thus *kardia* comes to stand for the whole of the inner being of man in contrast to his external side; the heart, the innermost part of man, represents the ego, the person (d) Thus the heart is supremely the one centre in man to which God turns, in which the religious life is rooted, which determines moral conduct (3) “in the inward part, the bosom, of the earth.”

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, pages 325-326: (1) Prop. that organ in the animal body which is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and hence was regarded as the seat of physical life (2) Univ. *kardia* denotes the seat and centre of all physical and spiritual life (3) The vigor and sense of physical life. (4) The centre and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors; of things done from the heart i.e., cordially or sincerely, truly; spec. of the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence; of the will and character; of the soul so far forth as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions; of the cultivation of endurance; in reference to the good-will and love; of a soul conscious of good or bad deeds (5) Used of the middle or central or inmost part of any thing, even though inanimate.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature gives the following meanings for the word *kardia* (pages 403-404): (1) Heart as the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life (a) As the center and source of physical life (b) As center and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking feeling and volition; in the all-inclusive sense of God or Christ; of the faculty of thought, of the thoughts themselves, of understanding, as the organ of natural and spiritual enlightenment; of the will and its decisions; of moral decisions, the moral life, of vices and virtues; of the emotions, wishes, desires; especially also of love; of disposition; the human heart as the dwelling place of heavenly powers and beings (2) Figuratively, heart in the sense interior, center.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “*kardia*, ‘the heart’ (Eng., ‘cardiac,’ etc.), the chief organ of physical life (‘for the life of the flesh is in the blood,’ (Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life. ‘The Bible describes human depravity as in the `heart,' because sin is a principle which has its seat in the center of man's inward life, and then `defiles' the whole circuit of his action, (Matt. 15:19,20). On the other hand, Scripture regards the heart as the sphere of Divine influence, (Rom. 2:15; Acts 15:9). The heart, as lying deep within, contains `the
hidden man,' (1 Pet. 3:4), the real man. It represents the true character but conceals it" (J. Laidlaw, in Hastings' Bible Dic.). As to its usage in the NT it denotes (a) the seat of physical life, (Acts 14:17; Jas. 5:5); (b) the seat of moral nature and spiritual life, the seat of grief, (John 14:1; Rom. 9:2; 2 Cor. 2:4); joy, (John 16:22; Eph. 5:19); the desires, (Matt. 5:28; 2 Pet. 2:14); the affections, (Luke 24:32; Acts 21:13); the perceptions, (John 12:40; Eph. 4:18); the thoughts, (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12); the understanding, (Matt. 13:15; Rom. 1:21); the reasoning powers, (Mark 2:6; Luke 24:38); the imagination, (Luke 1:51); conscience, (Acts 2:37; 1 John 3:20); the intentions, (Heb. 4:12), cf. (1 Pet. 4:1); purpose, (Acts 11:23; 2 Cor. 9:7); the will, (Rom. 6:17; Col. 3:15); faith, (Mark 11:23; Rom. 10:10; Heb. 3:12). The heart, in its moral significance in the OT, includes the emotions, the reason and the will.”

The kardia refers to the dominant lobe of the soul, the right lobe and is the mental activity or function of the psuche, “soul.” The kardia is that aspect of the soul, which circulates thought or mental activity and is where one’s frame of reference and memory center resides. It is also the place where one’s vocabulary and the classification of thoughts reside as well as the conscience where the norms and standards reside.

A person’s entire mental attitude circulates in the kardia as well as the sub conscience where various categories of things that shock or impress from adversity, sin, failure or disappointment are located.

Among the Greeks, the noun kardia was primarily used literally in a physiological sense as the central organ of the body of man or beast (Homer Iliad, 10, 94). It also appears in the figurative sense, especially in the poets, infrequently in prose, for the heart as the seat of moral and intellectual life.

The word was used to denote the seat of emotions and passions like anger (Homer, Iliad, 9, 646). Kardia was used as the seat of power of thought (Homer, Iliad, 21, 441).

Homer, in particular, brought together the heart and reason without clearly separating thought and feeling (Iliad, 21, 441). In philosophical terminology we find in Plato a weak trend toward ascribing to the kardia functions of the soul (Symp. 218a). But the basic physiological concept is maintained (cf. Tim. 65c).

In Stoicism the heart is in some sense the central organ of intellectual life, the seat of reason, from which feeling, willing and thinking proceed (cf. Chrysippus).

Behm suggests that kardia came to be ascribed as the “functions of the soul” (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 3, pages 608-609).

In the LXX, the noun kardia is used primarily to translate the Hebrew noun lev. The Old Testament uses the heart in both a literal and metaphorical sense and rarely is kardia used for the physiological heart since it is used primarily for the mental activities of a human being.
The emotions of a person were expressed from the *kardia*, such as joy (Deut. 28:47), or pain (Jer. 4:19) of tranquility (Pr. 14:30) or excitement (Deut. 19:6). The heart in the Old Testament was used as the seat of the understanding and of knowledge, of rational thought and was the place of intellectual activity.

Evil thoughts took place in the heart (Hebrews 3:17) and the heart can reject Bible teaching (Prov. 5:12, 13), and is the source of discord and troublemaking (Prov. 6:14, 18). Hatred emanates from the heart (2 Sam. 6:16) and the heart suffers disappointment from promises not kept (Prov. 13:12).

The heart promotes mental attitude sins: (1) Bitterness (Prov. 14:10), (2) Sorrow and disappointment (Prov. 14:13), (3) Pride (Prov. 21:4; Obad. 3), (4) Worry (Eccl. 2:23). The frantic search for happiness is related to the heart (Eccl. 1:13) and reversionism is described in terms of the heart (Jer. 17:5, 9; Zech. 7:12). Revolution and insubordination are described as being in the heart (2 Sm. 15:6; Jer. 5:23; Ezek. 6:9) as well as hypocrisy is related to the heart (Job. 36:13; Ps. 55:21).

The heart is related to psychosis (Is. 13:7, 8) and mental attitude sins relate the old sin nature to the heart (Ps. 66:18; 101:5; Prov. 6:18; Mt. 12:35; 15:18, 19; Lu. 6:45; 24:25).

The noun *kardia* appears 163 times in the Greek New Testament and refers to the inner person, the seat of understanding, knowledge, and will, and takes on as well the meaning of conscience. *Kardia* is the center of the person, that which determines one’s life and from which one must determine one’s life.

The *kardia* is a part of the essence of the soul. The perceptive apparatus in the unregenerate is different from the regenerate. A regenerate person possesses a body, soul and human spirit thus making them trichotomous whereas the unregenerate person possesses only a body and a soul making them dichotomous (See 1 Corinthians 15:45).

The body is called *soma*, the soul is called *psuche* and the spirit is called *pneuma* in the original language of the Greek New Testament.

The mentality of the soul is divided into two parts: (1) *Nous* (νοῦς), “left lobe of the soul” (2) *Kardia* (καρδία), “right lobe of the soul.”


The Essence of the Heart: (1) Frame of reference (Proverbs 4:4) (2) Memory center (Philippians 1:13) (3) Vocabulary storage (4) Categorical storage, i.e. classification of thoughts (5) Conscience, i.e. norms and standards (Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 13:5; 1 Cor. 8:7; 2 Cor. 4:2; 5:11; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 2:19). (6) Mentality (7) Subconscience.

The *kardia* in the Bible is the mental activity or function of the *psuche*, “soul.” In the *psuche*, it “circulates” thought, mental activity just as the physiological heart does the same with blood. It is the thinking part, analytical, reasoning part of the
soul and dominant thinking part of the soul and is the target of Bible teaching, the Word of God.

The *kardia* is that aspect of the soul, which circulates thought or mental activity and is where one’s frame of reference and memory center resides. It is also the place where one’s vocabulary and the classification of thoughts reside as well as the conscience where the norms and standards reside.

A person’s entire mental attitude circulates in the *kardia* as well as the subconscious where various categories of things that shock or impress from adversity, sin, failure or disappointment are located. Also, it contains the volition, which enables a person to make decisions.

Therefore, in Romans 8:27, the Father searches the heart of the Christian where not only the Christian’s thinking takes place but also where the Spirit’s intercession takes place.

All three members of the Trinity dwell in the Christian and specifically in their souls and so in a sense because the soul is in the body, the Trinity indwells the body of every Christian.

God the Father indwells the Christian (John 14:22-23; Eph. 4:6; Phil. 2:13; 1 John 4:16; 2 John 9). God the Son indwells the Christian (John 14:20; 17:22-23, 26; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20a; Col. 1:27). God the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16).

**Romans 8:8-11**, “Furthermore, those who at any time exist in the state of being in bondage to the flesh, as an eternal spiritual truth can never please God. However, all of you, without exception are, absolutely not, as an eternal spiritual truth, existing in the state of being in bondage to the flesh but rather in subjection to the authority of the Spirit, if in fact and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, who is God does dwell in all of you. Of course, He does. However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument anyone does not possess at all the Spirit proceeding from Christ, then this one, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means belongs to Him. However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument Christ does, as an eternal spiritual truth, exist in all of you. Of course, He does! Then, on the one hand, the body is, as an eternal spiritual truth dead because of the sin nature while on the other hand, the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth, life in all of you because of righteousness. However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, proceeding from the One (the Father) who raised the unique Person of Jesus from the dead ones, does dwell in all of you. Of course, He does! Then, the One (the Father) who raised Christ from the dead ones, will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who does permanently dwell in all of you.”
Therefore, in Romans 8:27, Paul teaches that the Father searches the heart of the Christian and this is where the Spirit’s intercession for the Christian with inexpressible groanings takes place since the Spirit indwells the soul of every Christian where the *kardia*, “heart” resides.

The noun *kardia* functions as an “accusative direct object” meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *ereunao*.

The word is in the plural and means, “hearts.” The context implies that the article preceding the noun *kardia*, “hearts” functions as a “possessive personal pronoun” indicating that these hearts “belong to” Christians. Therefore, we will translate the articular construction of the noun *kardia*, “our hearts.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“Knows” is the third person singular perfect active indicative form of the verb *oida* (οἶδα) which denotes that the Father has a “perfect, intimate knowledge” of the mind of the Spirit.

The word denotes not only the Father’s intimate knowledge of the Spirit’s mind but also the “perfection” of this knowledge since all three members of the Trinity are perfect. The Father has a perfect, intimate knowledge of the Spirit since all three members of the Trinity are co-equal, co-infinite, and co-eternal, all inherently have the same attributes and have always and will always be in perfect agreement with each other. They have always and will always experience perfect, uninterrupted fellowship with each other. The word speaks of the omniscience of the Father and the intimacy that there is among the three members of the Trinity.

Since the Father searches the heart of the Christian, it follows logically that He would know for certain what the Spirit is doing in those hearts by way of intercession.

The third person singular form of the verb refers of course to the Father.

The perfect tense of the verb *oida* is a “perfect with a present force” demonstrating little distinction between the act and its results since the verb is a “stative” verb emphasizing a state. Therefore, the perfect tense of *oida* emphasizes the eternal state of the Father always having a perfect, intimate knowledge of the mind of the Spirit.

The active voice of the verb is “stative” meaning that the subject exists in the state indicating by the verb. Therefore, this emphasizes that the Father has always “existed in the state of” having a perfect intimate knowledge of the mind of the Spirit.
The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate oida, “knows perfectly and intimately.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“What” is the accusative neuter singular form of the interrogative pronoun tis (τίς) (tis), which refers to the content or what the Spirit is thinking and functions as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb oida. We will translate the word, “what.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“Is” does not translate a Greek word but is correctly added by the translators since the third person singular present active indicative form of the verb eimi (ἐιμί) (i-mee) is deliberately omitted by Paul since he is employing the figure of ellipsis, though it is clearly implied.

The verb eimi means, “to exist in a particular state or condition.” Therefore, it denotes the “state or condition” of the mind-set or mental attitude of the Spirit.

The present tense of the verb is a “customary,” which denotes the ongoing or perpetual or eternal state of the Spirit’s mind-set. It speaks of the eternality of the Spirit.

The active voice is “stative” indicating that the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb eimi. Therefore, the “stative” active voice indicates that the Spirit’s mind set always “exists in a particular state,” which the Father knows perfectly and intimately.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact and Bible doctrine.

We will translate eimi, “is eternally.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”
“The mind” is the articular nominative neuter singular form of the noun *phronema* (φρόνημα) (fron-ay-mah).

The noun *phronema* occurs as early as Homer in the eighth century B.C. It denotes the “mind, will” or “spirit.” It could also be used with the sense of “high-mindedness” or in a positive sense meaning “courage” or in a negative sense meaning “arrogance, conceit” (Liddell and Scott, page 1956).

Like *phroneo*, the noun *phronema* is derived from *phren*, which originally denoted the diaphragm and was seen as the seat of intellectual and spiritual activity (Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 9, page 220).

*Phren* and its cognates soon lost the physical sense and in Homer the intellectual sense of “mind, thought” predominates. Thus, *phronema* to Plato who lived in the fourth century B.C. was an intellectual or spiritual attitude (Laws 9.865d) or the disposition of a person (Republic 9.573b).

Josephus used the noun to refer to the attitude or disposition (Antiquities 12.6.3). The word appears only twice in the Septuagint and in both instances it appears in the apocryphal literature (2 Macc. 7:21; 13:9).

*Phronema* occurs only four times in the Greek New Testament, Romans 8:6 twice and Romans 8:7 and 8:27.

**Romans 8:6**, “In fact, the mind-set produced by the flesh is, as an eternal spiritual truth temporal spiritual death. However, the mind-set produced by the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth life as well as peace.”

In Romans 8:6, the noun *phronema* refers to the Christian’s “mind-set” or “state of mind” or “mental attitude” and is used in relation to both the sin nature and the Spirit. Thus, Paul is saying that the “mind-set” or “mental attitude” produced by the sin nature is temporal spiritual death, i.e. loss of fellowship with God whereas the “mind-set” or “mental attitude” produced by the Spirit is experiencing eternal life and peace and thus experiencing fellowship with God.

**Romans 8:7**, “Because, the mind-set produced by the flesh is, as an eternal spiritual truth antagonistic towards God for you see, it never, as an eternal spiritual truth, permits itself to be subjected to God’s Law because it, as an eternal spiritual truth, does not even have the capacity to do so.”

In Romans 8:7, the noun *phronema* refers to the Christian’s “mind-set” or “state of mind” or “mental attitude” and is used in relation to the sin nature. Thus, Paul is saying that the “mind-set” or “mental attitude” produced by the sin nature is hostile towards God.

In Romans 8:27, the noun is used with reference to the “mental attitude” of the Spirit, which involves His sovereign will, desires and wisdom.

The articular construction of *phronema* indicates that it functions as a “nominative subject” meaning that it is performing the action of the verb *eimi*, “is,”
which is deliberately omitted by Paul but implied due to his use of the figure of ellipsis.

The New American Standard Updated Version correctly inserts the word “is” into its translation.

We will translate *phronema*, “the mind-set.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the mind-set…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“Of the Spirit” is the articular genitive neuter singular form of the noun *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), which refers to the Holy Spirit.

The article is “anaphoric” indicating that the word’s usage in verse 26 is being used again in verse 27 and that its meaning is being used again as well.

Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”

The noun *pneuma* functions as a “genitive of possession” meaning that this mind-set or mental attitude “belongs to” the Spirit. We will translate *pneuma*, “the Spirit’s.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“Because” is the conjunction *hoti* (ὅτι) (hot-ee), which is employed with the indicative mood of the verb *entunchano*, “He intercedes” in order to form a dependent “causal” clause. This causal clause presents the reason for the previous statement that the Father who searches the Christian’s heart, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set. Therefore, this causal clause indicates that the Father knows intimately and perfectly the Spirit’s mind-set “because” it is in accordance with His will that the Spirit intercedes for the Christian. The Father knows perfectly and intimately the Spirit’s mind-set because they are always in agreement with each other. Therefore, the Spirit’s intercession on behalf of the Christian is always in accordance with the Father’s will. We will translate *hoti*, “because.”
Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: "That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set because…"

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“He intercedes” is the third person singular present active indicative form of the verb entunchano (ἐντυγχάνω) (en-toong-khan-o).

The verb entunchano is a compound composed of the preposition en, “in” and the verb tunchano, “to hit” (a target).

In classical usage it means “to meet” (someone), especially by chance. It also can mean “to talk with” as well as “to intercede for.” Moulton-Milligan cites a technical use of this verb as “to petition” or “to appeal” as well as its normal classical sense (cf. Josephus Antiquities 12.2.2 of an “appeal” to a king) (page 219).

The verb appears only once in the canonical portion of the Septuagint, in Daniel 6:13 (LXX 6:12) where it means, “to petition.” It only occurs five times in the Greek New Testament (Acts 25:24; Romans 8:27, 34; 11:2; Hebrews 7:25).

In Acts 25:24, the verb is used of the Jews “appealing” to Festus to put to death Paul. It is used in Romans 11:2 of Elijah petitioning God against Israel. In Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25, the verb entunchano is used of Jesus Christ’s intercessory prayer ministry on behalf of His church at the right hand of the Father.

In Romans 8:27, the verb is used of the Holy Spirit “interceding” on behalf of the saints. It refers to the Holy Spirit speaking to the Father on behalf of Christians.

The third person singular form of the verb is an obvious reference to the Holy Spirit and means, “He.”

The present tense of the verb is “customary” present used to signal an ongoing state. Therefore, Paul is saying that the Spirit “continually” or “always” intercedes for the saints.

The active voice is “stative” indicating that the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb entunchano. This indicates that the Spirit “exists in the state of” always interceding for the saints.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate the verb entunchano, “He always intercedes.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set because He always intercedes...”
Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“For the saints” is composed of the preposition huper (ὑπέρ) (hoop-er), “for” and the genitive masculine plural form of the adjective hagios (ἡγιός), which is hagiois (ἡγιόις), “the saints.”

There is no certain etymology for hagios. Hagios refers to “a person or thing that has been set apart as sacred or consecrated to God.” It is not found in Homer or in the writers of the Greek tragedies.

The word appears predominately among the Hellenistic writers. It is first found in Herodotus where uses it to describe the temple of Venus in the district Prosopitis (The History 2.41).

Hagios is used of sanctuaries (Dem. 59, 77). The Hellenistic inscriptions confirm this usage, particularly for oriental sanctuaries. Aristotle employs the word to describe an oath (Mirabilia 834b 11). Aristophanes calls people hagios (Birds 522).

The word was used as epithet describing oriental gods such as Isis, Serapis, and Baal and was transferred over to the Greek gods as well. Originally a cultic concept connected with the mystery religions of ancient Greece.

Hagios was used by Aristophanes and Demosthones with reference to the customs connected with the mystery religions in Greece. Demosthones used it to describe the most beautiful and sacred things that are not accessible to the general public.

The Greeks used three different word groups to denote what is holy: (1) heiros, “what is set apart for the deity (2) hosios, “the obligation of service to a deity (3) hagios, “a person or thing set apart as consecrated to the deity.”

Both, hagios and hasios emphasized the duty in worshipping the holy. Hagios was used by the Greeks to denote the quality possessed by things and persons that could approach a divinity. It was one of five words used by the Greeks to describe their concept of holiness and is the only word used in the Bible to describe the biblical concept of holiness.

The basic idea of hagios among the Greeks was separation and consecration and devotion to the service of a deity. The Greeks used the word to describe things which have been “devoted to the gods, set apart for the gods for religious purposes only, consecrated to the gods.” It was used to describe people who are “devoted to the service of a god, separated to the service of the god.”

Liddell and Scott (Greek-English Lexicon, New Edition, page 9): (1) in good sense, sacred, holy; of things, sacred holy; of persons, holy, pure (2) in bad sense, accursed, execrable.
In the Septuagint, *hagios* is the equivalent for the different forms of the Hebrew term *qadhosh* (נָדֶשׁ), “holy.” The word was used in conjunction with Person of God (Lev. 20:3; 22:2; Ps. 33:21). It was used to describe Yahweh’s integrity or holiness. The word described His character and nature as well as His name and His people, Israel. It was used to describe the various articles of the Tabernacle and Temple along with the various offerings which spoke of Christ and His sacrifice. Anything that was set apart for God was considered *hagios* whether animals, people or things.

The Greek term of the LXX inherited the background of deep reverence and awe associated with the Holy God of Israel, and it retained all its cultic as well as ethical implications. The starting point for any understanding of holiness is the holiness of the Lord Himself. His perfect character and nature stands in contrast to sinfulness of His creatures.

The spiritual life and conduct of regenerate Israel demanded conformity to the will of God since God is perfection. The holiness or in other words, the perfect character and integrity of God are manifested in His plan of salvation and judgment. His perfect character and integrity is manifested by His faithfulness to the Covenants He has made with His people throughout the Old Testament dispensations.

The people of God through regeneration at the moment of salvation are made holy positionally by the omnipotence of God. The people are to walk in accordance with the fact that God has made them holy. They are to walk as those set apart to serve the Lord God exclusively.

Also, in a very unique way the Word of the Lord is holy since it reveals His perfect character and integrity that is hidden in the essence of God. This thought pervades Judaism which readily holds the Scripture to be holy (1 Macc. 12:9).

The Spirit is described as holy (Ps. 51:11) since He is a member of the Trinity. The Messiah is called “the Holy One of God” (Ps. 16:10 [LXX 15:10]).

The following were described as set apart or holy to the Lord in the OT: (1) all firstborn of people as well as animals (Nm. 3:13). (2) individuals (Jer. 1:5). (3) offerings (Ex. 29:33). (4) tabernacle and temple (Ex. 28:29; 1 K. 9:3; 2 Ch. 35:5). (5) articles and utensils used by the priests (Ex. 30:25-29; 1K. 8:4 [LXX 3 K. 8:4] ) (6) high priest’s garments (Ex. 28:2).

The adjective *hagios* is employed extensively in the Greek New Testament appearing 230 times. The same concepts expressed by *hagios* in classical Greek and the LXX are expressed in the Greek New Testament.

*Hagios* in the New Testament is used to describe God’s holiness or in other words His perfect character and integrity. Therefore, it is used to describe the individual members of the Trinity.
God the Father is *hagios* (John 17:11; 1 Pet. 1; 15). Lord Jesus Christ is *hagios* (John 6:69; Luke 4:34). The Spirit is *hagios* (Matt. 1:18; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; Titus 3:5). The believer is described as *hagios* in numerous passages in the Greek New Testament where the word is usually translated, “saints” (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:27; 1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 3:1, etc.). The Scriptures are described as *hagios* (Rom. 1:2), and the apostles (Eph. 3:5; Rev. 18:20). Bible Doctrine is described as *hagios* (Jude 1:20).

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains (volume 2): (1) pertaining to being holy in the sense of superior moral qualities and possessing certain essentially divine qualities in contrast with what is human – ‘holy, pure, divine’ (page 745). (2) pertaining to being dedicated or consecrated to the service of God – ‘devout, godly, dedicated’ (page 539).

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon (pages 6-7): (1) properly reverend, worthy of veneration (2) set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His (3) of sacrifices and offerings; prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean (4) in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy.

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised (page 3): (1) separate from common condition and use; dedicated (2) hallowed; used of things (3) the sanctuary; and of persons, saints, e.g. members of the first Christian communities (4) pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally; holy.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (pages 9-10): (1) adjective of things, in the cultic sense dedicated to God, holy, sacred, i.e. reserved for God and His service (2) holy=pure, perfect, worthy of God (3) of persons, of human beings consecrated to God, holy (4) of angels, holy (5) of Christ, holy (6) used as a pure substantive, what is holy (7) concrete sacrificial meat (8) sanctuary (9) the Holy One, of Christ (10) the holy ones of the angels (11) saints of Christians as consecrated to God (12) of other men especially close to God.

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “*Hagios* is from the same root as *hagnos* (found in *hazo*, ‘to venerate’), fundamentally signifies ‘separated’ (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods), and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred. (a) It is predicated of God (as the absolutely ‘Holy’ One, in His purity, majesty and glory): of the Father, e. g., Luke 1:49; John 17:11; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Rev 4:8; 6:10; of the Son, e. g., Luke 1:35; Acts 3:14; 4:27,30; 1 John 2:20; of the Spirit, e. g., Matt 1:18 and frequently in all the Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Thes.; also in 2 Tim 1:14; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Jude 20. (b) It is used of men and things (see below) in so far as they are devoted to God. Indeed the quality, as attributed to God, is often presented in a way which involves divine demands upon the conduct of believers. These are called *hagioi*,
{'saints,' i. e., ‘sanctified’ or ‘holy’ ones. This sainthood is not an attainment, it is a state into which God in grace calls men; yet believers are called to sanctify themselves (consistently with their calling, 2 Tim 1:9), cleansing themselves from all defilement, forsaking sin, living a ‘holy’ manner of life, 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:11, and experiencing fellowship with God in His holiness. The saints are thus figuratively spoken of as ‘a holy temple’, 1 Cor 3:17 (a local church); Eph 2:21 (the whole Church), cp. 5:27; ‘a holy priesthood,’ 1 Peter 2:5; ‘a holy nation,’ 2:9.

‘It is evident that hagios and its kindred words... express something more and higher than hieros, sacred, outwardly associated with God;... something more than semnos, worthy, honorable; something more than hagnos, pure, free from defilement. Hagios is... more comprehensive.... It is characteristically godlikeness’ (G. B. Stevens, in Hastings' Bib. Dic.). The adjective is also used of the outer part of the tabernacle, Heb 9:2 (RV, ‘the holy place’); of the inner sanctuary, 9:3, RV, ‘the Holy of Holies’; 9:4, ‘a holy place,’ RV; v. 25 (plural), of the presence of God in heaven, where there are not two compartments as in the tabernacle, all being ‘the holy place’; 9:8,12 (neuter plural); 10:19, ‘the holy place,’ RV (KJV, ‘the holiest,’ neut. plural); of the city of Jerusalem. Rev 11:2; its temple, Acts 6:13; of the faith. Jude 20; of the greetings of saints, 1 Cor 16:20; of angels, e. g., Mark 8:38; of apostles and prophets, Eph 3:5; of the future heavenly Jerusalem, Rev 21:2, 10; 22:19. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Hagios refers to “a person or thing that has been set apart as sacred or consecrated or dedicated to God.” It was one of five words used by the Greeks to describe their concept of holiness and is the only word used in the Bible to describe the biblical concept of holiness.

Hagios functions here in Romans 8:27 as it did in Romans 1:7 as a technical term describing all the members of the royal family of God in Rome who have been set apart through the Baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation in order to order serve God.

The church age believer has been “set apart” for God’s purpose and plan through the baptism of the Spirit and has acquired the principle of God’s integrity through the imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of salvation (See Romans 4).

The “baptism of the Spirit” takes place exclusively during the dispensation of the church age and is accomplished at the moment of salvation when the omnipotence of the Spirit places the believer in a eternal union with Christ, thus identifying the believer positionally with Christ in His death, resurrection and session.

Romans 6:3-5, “Or, are some of you in a state of ignorance concerning the fact that all of us who have been identified with Christ, who is Jesus, have
been identified with His spiritual death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism with respect to His physical death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead ones through the glory of the Father, in the same way, we, ourselves will also walk in the realm of an extraordinary life. Therefore, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that we are entered into union with Him, conformed to His physical death. Of course, we believe this is true. Then, certainly, we will also be united with Him, conformed to His resurrection.”

1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

“Baptized” is the verb 

baptizo (βαπτίζω), “to cause the believer to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ.”

At the moment of salvation, the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hagios, “saints” is a reference to the doctrine of “sanctification,” which is a technical theological term for the believer who has been set apart through the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation in order to serve God exclusively.

“Sanctification” is accomplished by God in three stages: (1) Positional (2) Experiential (3) Ultimate.

“Positional sanctification” is the believer’s “entrance” into the plan of God for the church age resulting in eternal security as well as two categories of positional truth (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Thess. 5:23; Eph. 5:26-27; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 6:3, 8; 2 Thess. 2:13).

“Retroactive” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His death and burial (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12).

Romans 6:4, “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

“Current” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His resurrection, ascension and session (See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-4).

Colossians 3:1, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

“Positional sanctification”: (1) What God has done for the church age believer. (2) His viewpoint of the church age believer. (3) Sets up the potential to experience sanctification in time. (4) Provides the believer with the guarantee of receiving a resurrection body.

“Experiential sanctification” is the function of the church age believer’s spiritual life in time through obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by
the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God (John 17:17; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 7; 1 Tim. 2:15).

2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”

“Experiential sanctification” is the post-salvation experience of the church age believer who is in fellowship with God by confessing any known sin to the Father when necessary followed by obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the Word of God.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

1 John 2:5, “But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

This obedience constitutes obeying the commands to be filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

Ephesians 5:18: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit.”

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

This obedience enables the Spirit to reproduce the character of Christ in the believer.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Experiential sanctification is only a potential since it is contingent upon the church age believer responding to what God has done for him at the moment of salvation, therefore, only believers who are obedient to the Word of God will experience sanctification in time.

“Ultimate sanctification” is the perfection of the church age believer’s spiritual life at the Rapture, i.e. resurrection of the church, which is the completion of the plan of God for the church age believer (1 Cor. 15:53-54; Gal. 6:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; John 6:40). It is the guarantee of a resurrection body and will be experienced by every believer regardless of their response in time to what God has done for them at salvation.
1 Corinthians 15:51-52, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Sanctification is experiencing the holiness or in other words manifesting the character of God through one’s thoughts, words and actions.

1 Peter 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’”

In Romans 8:27, the preposition huper is used with the genitive form of the adjective hagios, “the saints” and functions as a marker of participants who are benefited by an event. Therefore, huper with the genitive form of hagios, “the saints” marks the Christian as “benefiting” from the Spirit’s intercession on their behalf. We will translate the prepositional phrase huper hagion, “on behalf of the saints.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set because He always intercedes on behalf of the saints…”

Romans 8:27, “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

“According to the will of God” is composed of the preposition kata (κατά), “according to” and the accusative masculine singular form of the noun theos (θεός), “God.”

The noun theos refers to God the Father since the Scriptures teach that He is the author of the plan of salvation for mankind and the church age believer. Therefore, it is His will that is spoken of here in Romans 8:27.

Matthew 12:50, “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 26:39, “And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

John 4:34, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.’”

John 5:30, “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
Ephesians 1:1-12, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.”

Colossians 1:9, “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

James 1:18, “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.”

1 Peter 4:19, “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

The fact that the Father’s will is referred to in Romans 8:27 is that the Scriptures teach that all prayer must be addressed to the Father and also that He is the member of the Trinity that is recipient of all prayer whether from the Spirit, the Son or the Christian.

1 John 5:14-15, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

All prayer made by the believer-priest in the church age must be addressed to God the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6). Prayer must be made in the name or
Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17). Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

God the Father receives prayer from three different sources in the church age:
(1) God the Son (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25): He intercedes for the believer at the right hand of God the Father. (2) God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:15, 26-27; Gal. 4:6): He makes intercessory prayer to God the Father for us when we don’t know what to pray for. (3) Believer-Priest (Heb. 4:16): He makes intercessory prayer for others and personal petitions for himself.

The context indicates that Paul is also using the figure of “metonymy” meaning that the noun theos, “God (the Father)” is used for the Father’s will. In Romans 8:26, the expression katho dei, “as we should,” which is a reference to prayer in accordance with the will of God parallels the prepositional phrase kata theon, “according to God,” i.e. “according to God,” which appears here in Romans 8:27.

The preposition kata with the accusative noun theos, “God” denotes conformity to a particular standard or policy. Therefore, kata specifies that the Spirit’s intercession on behalf of the saints “conforms to” or is “in accordance with” the Father’s will.

We will translate the prepositional phrase kata theon, “in accordance with God the Father’s will.”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 8:27: “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set because He always intercedes on behalf of the saints in accordance with God the Father’s will.”
Romans 8:28—For Those Characterized By Love For God, The Spirit Works All Things Together For Good, For The Chosen Ones In Accordance with God’s Predetermined Plan

In Romans 8:28, the apostle Paul teaches that for those who are characterized by love for God, the Spirit works all things together for the good, i.e. conformity to the image of Christ, for the chosen ones in accordance with God’s predetermined plan.

**Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**

“**And**” is the “emphatic” use of the conjunction *de* (δὲ) (deh), which introduces a statement that advances upon Paul’s statement in Romans 8:26-27 and intensifies it.

In Romans 8:26, Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit assists the Christian in his weakness because many times in adversity the Christian is totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with the will of the Father but the Spirit Himself intercedes for the Christian with inexpressible groanings.

**Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”**

In Romans 8:27, Paul provides information regarding the Spirit’s intercession, which explains or clarifies how the Spirit’s intercession can be heard by the Father when this intercession is with inexpressible groanings. He teaches that God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of the Father.

**Romans 8:27, “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mindset because He always intercedes on behalf of the saints in accordance with God the Father’s will.”**

Now, here in Romans 8:28, the apostle Paul develops further this statement in verse 27 by advancing upon it and intensifying it. He does this by presenting the ultimate purpose of the Spirit’s intercessory ministry, namely to accomplish the Father’s eternal purpose for the Christian, which is to conform the Christian into the image of Christ according to Romans 8:29.

**Romans 8:29, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”**
Paul’s statement in Romans 8:28 concludes his teaching regarding the Spirit’s various ministries on behalf of the Christian, which appear in Romans 8:1-27.

There is a difference of opinion among interpreters of Romans 8:28 regarding Paul’s use of this word. For example, some like Murray interpret de as “transitional” meaning that the word is introducing a transition to a further thought of much the same kind. Then, there is Godet who contends that the conjunction de is “adversative” introducing a statement that presents a contrast between the groanings of the previous section and God’s working in this one. Others like Moo view the conjunction de at the beginning of Romans 8:28 as “continuative: in this time of suffering and expectation (verses 18-25) the Spirit helps us by interceding for us (verses 26-27) and, by God’s providence, ‘all things work together for good.’” (The Epistle to the Romans, page 527; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.).

The conjunction de is emphatic in that not only presenting “additional” information regarding the Spirit’s work on behalf of Christian but he is also “advancing” and “intensifying” and bringing to an end his discussion of the Spirit rather than transitioning to another topic of discussion or presenting a contrast.

As we will note when we study panta, “all things” and the verb sunergeo, “works together” in Romans 8:28, the subject of the latter is the Holy Spirit rather than God the Father or panta, “all things.”

First of all, as Gordon Fee points out Paul never uses panta, “all things” as the subject of an active verb (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588). He states that the only exceptions are in response to the slogan, “all things are permitted” where Paul keeps the “formula” intact with “but not all things profit/edify” (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23) (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588).

Fee also points out that where panta appears as the object of a personal verb, it almost always precedes the verb as we have here in Romans 8:28 (See 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 2:10; 9:12, 23, 25; 10:31; 11:2; 13:7 [4x]; 14:26; 15:27; 16:14; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 7:14; Ephesians 1:22; 6:21) (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588).

Furthermore, he states that in the two other occurrences of this verb sunergeo in the writings of Paul (1 Corinthians 16:16; 2 Corinthians 6:1), this verb has a personal subject (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588).

The Spirit is the subject of sunergeo even though God the Father is the most recently mentioned personal noun (“those who love God”) and would function as the natural antecedent. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Father has already become the subject here at the beginning of Romans 8:28. However, in Romans 8:1-27, the Holy Spirit has been the conceptual subject throughout.

In these verses Paul has been teaching and reminding his readers as to the various ministries of the Holy Spirit on their behalf. In fact, in the immediate
context in Romans 8:26-27, the Spirit is the grammatical subject where Paul has been discussing the intercessory prayer ministry of the Spirit on behalf of the Christian. The most natural way to read Romans 8:28 would be to assume the continuation of the same subject, the Spirit as in Romans 8:26-27.

Also we must take into consideration that beginning in Romans 8:16-27, Paul has been using sun-compound verbs, which carry through to Romans 9:1. In several of these verbs, the Holy Spirit is the subject. This is the case in Romans 8:16 where the Spirit is the subject of the verb summartureo, “bears witness to.”

Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, bears witness to our human spirit that we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s children.”

In Romans 8:26, the Spirit is the subject of the verb sunantilambanomai, “assists.”

Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”

Now, in Romans 8:28, Paul continues his discussion regarding the work of the Spirit by using the Spirit as the subject of the sunergeo, “works together.”

Also, the expression oidamen de, “and we know” at the beginning of Romans 8:28 is a response to the expression ouk oidamen, “we do not know” in Romans 8:26.

Therefore, in Romans 8:28, we have the “emphatic” use of the conjunction de, which introduces a statement that advances upon Paul’s statement in Romans 8:26-27 regarding the intercessory prayer ministry of the Spirit on behalf of the Christian and intensifies it. The apostle Paul develops further this statement in verse 27 by advancing upon it and intensifying it in verse 28 by presenting the ultimate purpose of the Spirit’s intercessory ministry, namely to accomplish the Father’s eternal purpose, which is to conform the Christian into the image of Christ according to Romans 8:29. Therefore, in Romans 8:28, we will translate the conjunction de, “in fact.”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“We know” is the first person plural perfect active indicative form of the verb oida (οἶδα) which means, “to know for certain, to know without doubt.”

The word denotes that Paul and his fellow Christians in Rome to whom he was writing this epistle “knew without a doubt” that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God, to those called in keeping with the Father’s
purpose because the Spirit is interceding for them in prayer to the Father. Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they have been justified by faith in Christ and consequently have peace with God.

Romans 5:1-2, “Therefore, because we have been justified by means of faith as a source, we, as an eternal spiritual truth, always have peace in the presence of God through our Lord who is Jesus, who is the Christ. Through whom also, we have as a permanent possession access to this gracious benefit in which we forever stand and in addition we make it a habit to rejoice upon the confident expectation of sharing God’s glory.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Spirit assures that the adversity that they experience is developing Christ-like character in them and confidence in their relationship with God.

Romans 5:3-4, “In fact, not only this but we also make it a habit to rejoice on account of our adversities because we know for certain that adversity, as an eternal spiritual truth, produces perseverance. And in addition, perseverance, as an eternal spiritual truth produces tested character and in addition tested character, as an eternal spiritual truth, produces confidence.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Spirit assures them that God loves them.

Romans 5:5, “In fact, this confidence, as an eternal spiritual truth, never disappoints because God’s love is always being poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Father sacrificed His Son for them while they were His enemies.

Romans 5:6-8, “For while, we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still helpless, still, at that particular appointed moment in history, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of the ungodly. For, it is unlikely, anyone will die as a substitute for the benefit of a righteous person. In fact, possibly, someone might also have the courage to voluntarily die as a substitute for the benefit of the good person. But, God (the Father), as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, proves His own divine-love for the benefit of all of us by the fact that while we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still sinners, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of all of us.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because if Christ died as a substitute for
them while they were unsaved, how much more then, will He deliver them from the wrath of God now that they are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:9, “Therefore, because we have been justified on the basis of His blood, how much more will we be delivered from His righteous indignation through Him.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because if they were reconciled to God through His Son’s death while His enemies, how much more will they be delivered by His Son’s life.

Romans 5:10, “For if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that while, we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, enemies, we were reconciled to God (the Father) by means of the spiritual death of His Son? Of course, we believe that this is true! How much more then because, we have been reconciled will we be delivered on account of His life.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because now that they have been reconciled to God, they will be delivered from the wrath of God on account of the life of Christ that they now possess.

Romans 5:11, “Furthermore, not only this but also we make it a habit to rejoice on account of our relationship with God through our Lord, who is Jesus, who is the Christ through whom we have now received this reconciliation.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they are no longer under the headship of Adam and under eternal condemnation but under the headship of Christ and God’s grace policy.

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because Christ’s obedience is the basis for their justification.

Romans 5:12-21, “Therefore, based on this (principle), just as, through one man the sin nature entered into the human race so that spiritual death entered through this sin nature. Thus, in this manner, spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race without exception because each and every member of the human race sinned (the moment Adam sinned). For you see, prior to the giving of the Law, personal sin was habitually taking place among the individual members of the human race however personal sin is never, as an eternal spiritual truth, charged to one’s account while the Law does not exist. Yet, in spite of this, spiritual death reigned as king from the fall of Adam to the giving of the Law to Moses, specifically, over those who had not sinned according to the same exact transgression committed by Adam,
who is, as an eternal spiritual truth, an illustration of the One destined to come. However, on the other hand, absolutely not like this transgression is, as an eternal spiritual truth, also, in the same way, the gracious act. For if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that by means of this transgression committed by the one, the entire human race died. Of course, we know this is true. How much more then has the grace originating from God and the gracious gift on the basis of grace, which is specifically, on the basis of the obedience of the one Man, who is Jesus, who is the Christ been generously and graciously offered to the entire human race. In fact, the condemnation through the one who sinned is absolutely not, as an eternal spiritual truth, like the gift itself. On the one hand the verdict arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation while on the other hand, the gracious act arose from innumerable transgressions resulting in justification. For if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that by means of the transgression committed by the one, spiritual death reigned as king through this one. Of course, we know this is true. Then, how much more those who do receive His transcendent grace, specifically, the gracious gift, which is His righteousness, will, as a certainty, reign as kings by means of life through the One, who is Jesus, who is the Christ. Therefore, as previously stated, just as through the one who committed the transgression resulted in condemnation affecting each and every member of the human race without exception in the same way also through the One who committed the righteous act resulted in the basis for the offer of justification, which produces (eternal) life, affecting each and every member of the human race without exception. For you see, just as through the one man’s disobedience, the entire human race has been rendered sinners in the same way also through the One’s obedience, many will, as a certainty, be rendered righteous. Now, the Law was an addendum in order that the transgression might increase but where personal sin increased, grace infinitely abounded in order that just as, the sin nature reigned as king in the realm of spiritual death in the same way, also grace would reign as king through righteousness resulting in eternal life through Jesus, who is the Christ, who is our Lord.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were identified with Christ in His spiritual death so as to solve their problem of being spiritually dead.

Romans 6:3, “Or, are some of you in a state of ignorance concerning the fact that all of us who have been identified with Christ, who is Jesus, have been identified with His spiritual death?”
Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were identified with Christ in His physical death so as to solve the problem of possessing a sin nature.

**Romans 6:4**, “Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism with respect to His physical death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead ones through the glory of the Father, in the same way, we, ourselves will also walk in the realm of an extraordinary life.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were identified with Christ in His resurrection in order that they might receive a resurrection body like Christ so as to replace his sinful body.

**Romans 6:5**, “Therefore, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that we are entered into union with Him, conformed to His physical death. Of course, we believe this is true. Then, certainly, we will also be united with Him, conformed to His resurrection.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because their old Adamic sin nature has been crucified at the Cross in order that it might be deprived of its power so that the believer might not be its slave.

**Romans 6:6**, “This we are very familiar with through instruction, namely, that our old man was crucified with Him in order that the sinful body would be deprived of its power with the result that we are no longer in a perpetual state of being slaves to the sin nature.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were freed from the tyranny of the sin nature because he has died with Christ as a result of having been identified with Christ in His physical death through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 6:7**, “For you see the one who has died is freed from the power of the sin nature.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because since they have died with Christ through the baptism of the Spirit, they will as a certainty, in the future, at the resurrection, live with Christ in the sense that they will receive a resurrection body like Christ.

**Romans 6:8**, “Now, as previously stated, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that we have died with Him. Of course, we have already established that this is true. Then, we do have this absolute confidence that we, as a certainty, will in the future also live with Him.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because physical death no longer has
dominion over Jesus Christ because He has been raised from the dead, then neither does the Christian’s sin nature have dominion over them who are identified with Christ in His physical death and resurrection.

Romans 6:9, “Because we know for certain, namely that because Christ was raised from the dead ones, He can never again, as an eternal spiritual truth, die. Death can never again, as an eternal spiritual truth, have dominion over Him.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Lord Jesus Christ died physically for the destruction of the Christian’s sin nature and now lives to God.

Romans 6:10, “For you see, the physical death that He died, He died for the destruction of the sin nature once and for all but the life that He now lives, He lives forever for the benefit of God the Father.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they are dead with respect to the sin nature but alive with respect to God in union with Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:11, “In the same way, also, on the one hand, all of you without exception make it your habit to regard yourselves as dead ones with respect to the sin nature while on the other hand those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, alive with respect to God the Father, in union with Christ, who is Jesus.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were no longer under law, but under God’s grace.

Romans 6:14, “For the sin nature, will, as a certainty, never again, have dominion over all of you for all of you, as an eternal spiritual truth, are by no means under the authority and dominion of the Law but rather under the authority and dominion of grace.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were once slaves to the sin nature but since obeying the gospel, they were delivered positionally from the sin nature.

Romans 6:17, “But now, thank God! Because all of you were once in a perpetual state of being slaves to the sin nature but then all of you obeyed from the heart that particular doctrinal standard with respect to which all of you were taught.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they were enslaved to God through their obedience to the gospel.
Romans 6:18, “And also, because having been set free from the tyranny of the sin nature, all of you became slaves of righteousness.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because since they have been freed from the sin nature and enslaved to God, the benefit that they now possess is that of being a servant of God, which results in sanctification and eternal life.

Romans 6:22, “But now, at the present time, because all of you have been set free from the tyranny of the sin nature and because all of you have become slaves to God the Father all of you at the present time possess your benefit (of being a servant of God) resulting in sanctification and the result, eternal life.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they possess eternal life.

Romans 6:23, “For you see the sin nature pays out spiritual death however God the Father graciously gives eternal life in the Person of Christ, who is Jesus, our Lord.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they have been married to Christ.

Romans 7:1-6, “Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”

They also know without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because in Romans 8:1, Paul assured his Christian readers in Rome that there is never any condemnation, none whatsoever for them because of their union with Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:1, “Therefore, there is now, as an eternal spiritual truth, never any condemnation, none whatsoever for the benefit of those in union with Christ who is Jesus.”
Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the life-giving Spirit’s authoritative power, by means of Christ Jesus, has set them free from the authoritative power of the sin nature as well as spiritual death’s.

Romans 8:2, “Because, the life-giving Spirit’s authoritative power, by means of (the death and resurrection of) Christ, who is Jesus, has set you free from the sin nature’s authoritative power as well as spiritual death’s.”

They also knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Father’s purpose for sacrificing His Son on the Cross was so that the righteous requirement of the Law would be fulfilled in an experiential sense in those Christians who are not conducting their lives in submission to the sin nature but in submission to the Spirit.

Romans 8:3-4, “Because with reference to the Law’s inability in which it was always powerless through the flesh, God the Father accomplished by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. In fact, with regards to the sin nature, He (the Father) executed the sin nature by means of His (Son’s) human nature. In order that the Law’s righteous requirement would be fulfilled in us, those of us who are not, as an eternal spiritual truth, conducting our lives in submission to the flesh but rather in submission to the Spirit.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Holy Spirit was given to the Christian so that he might experience deliverance from his sin nature and instead experience eternal life and the peace of God.

Romans 8:5-6, “For you see those who at any time exist in the state of being in submission to the flesh are, as an eternal spiritual truth, preoccupied with the things produced by the flesh. However, those in submission to the Spirit, the things produced by the Spirit. In fact, the mind-set produced by the flesh is, as an eternal spiritual truth temporal spiritual death. However, the mind-set produced by the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth life as well as peace.”

They also know without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Christian is no longer in bondage to the sin nature in a positional sense but rather in subjection to the authority of the Spirit. Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they are indwelt by the Spirit in contrast to the unbeliever who is not.

Romans 8:9, “However, all of you, without exception are, absolutely not, as an eternal spiritual truth, existing in the state of being in bondage to the flesh but rather in subjection to the authority of the Spirit, if in fact-and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, who is God does
dwell in all of you. Of course, He does. However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument anyone does not possess at all the Spirit proceeding from Christ, then this one, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means belongs to Him.”

They also know without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Christian is indwelt by Christ and although the Christian’s body is dead due to the sin nature, the Spirit is life and peace in them because of imputed righteousness.

Romans 8:10, “However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument Christ does, as an eternal spiritual truth, exist in all of you. Of course, He does! Then, on the one hand, the body is, as an eternal spiritual truth dead because of the sin nature while on the other hand, the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth, life in all of you because of righteousness.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead and will also give life to their mortal bodies through the Spirit who indwells them.

Romans 8:11, “However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, proceeding from the One (the Father) who raised the unique Person of Jesus from the dead ones, does dwell in all of you. Of course, He does! Then, the One (the Father) who raised Christ from the dead ones, will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who does permanently dwell in all of you.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because if by the Spirit, the Christian puts to death the deeds of the sin nature, then he will live and experience fellowship with God.

Romans 8:13b, “However, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument by means of the omnipotence of the Spirit, you, at any time, put to death the actions produced by the body, then, you will certainly cause yourself to live.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because they as the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:14, “Because, all of us who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, led by means of the Spirit, who is God, these are, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s sons.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Christian has been adopted “Romans style” into the royal family of God.
Romans 8:15, “Because by no means have all of you received the Spirit who brings about slavery resulting in fear again. On the contrary, all of you have received the Spirit who brings about the adoption as sons by means of whom, we, as an eternal spiritual truth, cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Holy Spirit testifies to the Christian’s human spirit that he or she is a child of God.

Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, bears witness to our human spirit that we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s children.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Christian is an heir of God the Father and will be made a joint-heir with Christ for enduring undeserved suffering.

Romans 8:17, “Furthermore, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument, we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, children. Of course, we are! Then, we are also, as an eternal spiritual truth, heirs: On the one hand, we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s heirs while on the other hand, we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, joint-heirs with Christ, if in fact, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument, we are, at the present time, suffering with Him (Of course, we are) in order that we also would be glorified with Him.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the undeserved suffering that the Christian now endures does not compare with the glory that is to be revealed to the Christian.

Romans 8:18, “In fact, I am always of the firm conviction that the sufferings during this present distinct period of history, are, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means worthy to be compared with the future glory to be revealed on behalf of us.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because all of creation anxiously and eagerly anticipates the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:19, “In fact, the creation anxiously anticipates, always eagerly waiting for the revealing of God’s sons.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because creation was subjected to futility by God in the confident expectation that the creation would also be set free from the Adamic curse into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
Romans 8:20-21, “Because, the creation was subjected to imperfection, by no means, voluntarily but rather because of the one who subjected it based upon a confident expectation. Namely, that even, the creation itself would be set free from being a slave to mortality to the freedom brought about by manifesting God’s children.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Christian, who has the first fruit, namely, the Spirit, groans within himself, waiting eagerly his adoption as a son, the redemption of his body at the resurrection of the church.

Romans 8:22-25, “In fact, we know for certain that all the individual parts of creation have been groaning and suffering great pain together in the past and continue up to this present moment. Furthermore, not only this, because, we ourselves, as an eternal spiritual truth, possess the first fruit, namely, the Spirit, we ourselves also always groan within ourselves. Consequently, we are always eagerly waiting for the adoption as sons, the redeeming of our body. Because with reference to this confident expectation, we were delivered. However, a confident expectation, which, at any time, is seen, is, as an eternal spiritual truth, by no means, characterized a confident expectation because who, at any time, confidently expects what he does see? However, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument, we, at any time, do confidently expect what we, at the present time, by no means see. Of course, we do! Then, by means of perseverance, we are always eagerly waiting.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Holy Spirit intercedes for the Christian in his weakness when he does not know what to pray for with regards to himself.

Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”

Paul and his readers knew without a doubt that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who love God because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of the Father.

Romans 8:27, “That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mindset because He always intercedes on behalf of the saints in accordance with God the Father’s will.”

Therefore, based upon Paul’s teaching in Romans 5:1-8:27, Paul and his readers knew for certain that the Spirit works all things together for good for those who
love God because the Father’s purpose for delivering them from sin through the
death and resurrection of Christ and affecting that deliverance through the various
ministries of the Holy Spirit was that they would rule over creation with Christ.

In Romans 8:28, the first person plural form of the verb *oida* is an “inclusive
we” referring to Paul and his audience, who like himself, are sinners who have
been declared justified by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The perfect tense of the verb *oida* is a “perfect with a present force”
demonstrating little distinction between the act and its results since the verb is a
“stative” verb emphasizing a state. Therefore, the perfect tense of *oida* emphasizes
the state of Paul and his Christian readers in Rome knowing without a doubt that
the Spirit works together all circumstances for good for those who love the Father
and are called according to His purpose.

The active voice of the verb is “stative” meaning that the subject exists in the
state indicating by the verb. Therefore, this emphasizes that Paul and his Christians
“existed in the state of” knowing without a doubt that the Spirit works together all
circumstances for good for those who love the Father and are called according to
His purpose.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified
statement of fact.

We will translate *oida*, “we know without a doubt.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a
doubt…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together
for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His
purpose.”

“That” is the conjunction *hoti* (ὁτι) (hot-ee), which is used with the indicative
mood of the verb *sunergeo*, “works together” in order to form an appositional
clause that it is presenting the content of what Paul and his fellow Christians in
Rome were totally certain and confident of. We will translate *hoti*, “that.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a
doubt that…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together
for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His
purpose.”

“To those who love God” is the articular dative masculine plural present active
participle form of the verb *agapao* (ἀγαπάω).

What English speaking people call “love” is differentiated in the Greek mind
and is expressed in various ways. What English speaking people call “love” is
differentiated in the Greek mind and is expressed in various ways.
Classical Greek has four verbs that denote “to love”: (1) **Erao** (ἕραω) (verb), “to love passionately, to desire, to yearn” (2) **Stergo** (στεργώ) (verb), “to affectionately love parents or children” (3) **Phileo** (φιλέω) (verb), “to personally love friends or family members” (4) **Agapao** (ἀγαπάω) (verb), “to be satisfied with, to honor, to receive, to greet, to prefer”

*Phileo* is the most common indicating attraction towards a person or thing such as love for one’s relatives or friends. In contrast *eros* is love, which desires to have or take possession.

*Agapao* originally meaning “to honor, welcome” is the least specifically defined word in classical Greek. It was synonymous in classical Greek with *phileo* but this is not the case in the Greek New Testament.

*Phileo* is the most general word for love or regard with affection and has many derivatives words. The verb denotes the attraction of people to one another who are close together both inside and outside the family. It includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of.

The verb *phileo* comes from the stem *phil* which became the basis for a wide variety of compounds. Thus, it was the most general word for love or regard with affection. The verb *phileo* denoted the personal love between friends and family members.

*Stergo* means, “to love, feel affection” especially of the mutual love of parents and children. It can also be used of the love of a person for their ruler, the love of tutelary god for the people and even of dogs for their master. It is less common for the love of husband and wife, and does not occur at all in the Greek New Testament, apart from the compounds *astorgos* (Rm. 1:31; 2 Tm. 3:3) and *philostorgos* (Rm. 12:10). It is found in 1 Clement 1:3 and Polycarp 4:2.

The verb *erao* and the noun *eros*, on the other hand, denote love between a man and a woman, which embraces longing, craving and sexual desire. The Greeks delighted in physical beauty and sensual desires found expression in the Dionysiac approach to and feeling for, life.

The god of love, *Eros*, was a significant part of Greek life, since she was the god of fertility. *Eros* was compelled by none but compelled all. The Greeks sought in *eros* intoxication and thus it was a religion to them. They would sing hymns to *Eros*. But *eros* did not simply refer to just the sensual but it also was an ecstasy that transported man beyond rationality.

For Plato, *eros* was the striving for righteousness, self-possession and wisdom. It is the embodiment of the good, the way to attain immorality (Symp. 200, 206). Aristotle took the concept to the next level where this striving for righteousness developed towards a spiritual union with the transcendental dominated.

The noun *eros* was a general love of the world seeking to satisfy itself wherever it can thus making no distinctions, whereas *agape* made distinctions, choosing and
keeping its object. *Eros* is determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion towards its object, whereas *agape* is a free and decisive act determined by its subject. *Eros* was a self-serving love, whereas *agape* was a giving love for the benefit of another.

The etymology of *agapao* and *agape* is not clear. In classical Greek, *agape* had nothing of the power of *eros* or the warmth of *phileo* for its meaning was weak and subject to change.

The verb *agapao* occurs quite frequently from Homer onwards in Greek literature, but the noun *agape* is only a late Greek construction and is almost completely lacking in pre-biblical Greek.

The examples of *agape* in classical Greek are few in number and in many cases doubtful or hard to date. There is one reference of *agape* outside the Bible where the goddess Isis is given the title *agape* (Oxyrhynchus Papyri, 1380, 109; 2nd century A.D.)

The verb often meant, “to be satisfied with something, to receive, to greet, to honor in terms of external attitude.” It related more toward an inward attitude in its meaning of “seeking after something, desiring someone or something.”

The verb *agapao* is often used in the classical Greek to denote friendship between equals, or sometimes sympathy. Sometimes *agapao* took on the meaning of “to prefer, to set one good or aim above another, to prioritize, to esteem one person more highly than another.”

The adjective *agapetos* was applied to a thing, which is right, or a person who is dear such as a child who is precious to a parent.


The verb *agapao* is quite common in the Septuagint and is used to translate as many as 19 different terms. The verb `ahiev (אָהֵי) is translated quite often with *agapao* and can refer to both persons and things.

`Ahiev denotes relationships between men with each other and secondly God’s relationship with man. It is used to describe Abraham’s love for Isaac (Gen. 22:2) and Isaac’s love for Rebekah (Gen. 24:67).

*Agapao* describes the Lord’s divine-love for Israel (Hosea 11:1), and how Israel was to reciprocate with this same love (Deut. 6:5; 11:1, 13).

The noun *agape* was to translate the Hebrew noun `ahavah (אהבה). David used the word in eulogizing Jonathan who died with his father Saul in battle with the Philistines (2 Sam. 1:26). It is also found in Ecclesiastes 9:1, and in the Song of Solomon (Sos. 2:4-5, 7, 3:5; 5:8; 7:6).

The verb occurs far more frequently than the noun in the LXX, and paved the way for its usage in the NT.
The noun *agape* appears 116 times in the Greek New Testament, the verb *agapao* appears 143 times and the adjective *agapetos* 63.

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, “love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness; plural, love-feasts” (page 2).

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon (page 4): (1) Affection, good-will, love, benevolence; Of the love of men to men; especially of that love of Christians towards Christians, which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or as expressed; of the love of men towards God; of the love of God towards Christ; of the love of Christ towards men (2) Plural, love-feasts expressing and fostering mutual love, which used to be held by Christians before the celebration of the Lord’s supper, at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of food provided at the expense of the wealthy.

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains (volume 2): (1) To have love for someone or something, based on sincere appreciation and high regard – ‘to love, to regard with affection, loving concern, love’ (pages 293-294). (2) A special type of communal meal having a particular significance for early Christians as an expression of their mutual affection and concern – ‘fellowship meal’ (page 253).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (pages 5-6): (1) Of human love without indication of the person who is the object of the love (2) Of the love of God and Christ to men; God is the source of love; of the relation between God and Christ (3) A love-feast, a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection with their church services, for the purpose of fostering and expressing brotherly love.

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “*agapao* and the corresponding noun *agape* present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5. ‘Agape and *agapao* are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8. Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God’s love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature
of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7,8. Love had its perfect expression among men in the
Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His
Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22. Christian love has God for its primary object, and
expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John
14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Selfwill, that is, self-pleasing, is the
negation of love to God. Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or
toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run
with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom
some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no
ill to any, 13:8,9,10; love seeks opportunity to do good to ‘all men, and especially
toward them that are of the household of the faith,’ Gal 6:10. See further 1 Cor 13
and Col 3:12-14. From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 105. In
respect of agapao as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant ‘love’ and
interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and
fostering a reverential ‘love’ in them towards the Giver, and a practical ‘love’
towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the
Giver. Agape is always rendered ‘love’ in the RV where the KJV has ‘charity,’ a
rendering nowhere used in the RV; in Rom 14:15, where the KJV has ‘charitably,’
the RV, adhering to the translation of the noun, has ‘in love.’ Note: In the two
statements in 1 John 4:8 and 16, ‘God is love,’ both are used to enjoin the exercise
of ‘love’ on the part of believers. While the former introduces a declaration of the
mode in which God's love has been manifested vv. 9,10, the second introduces a
statement of the identification of believers with God in character, and the issue at
the Judgment Seat hereafter v. 17, an identification represented ideally in the
sentence ‘as He is, so are we in this world.’”

In the Greek New Testament, the noun agape is used with God as the subject
and man as the object (Jn. 3:16-17). The word is also used with believers as the
subject and God as the object (Jn. 8:42; 14:21 ff.; 1 Jn. 4:16, 20). It is also used
with the Christian as the subject and his fellow believer and mankind in general as
the object. The word is used with the Father as the subject and the Son as the
object and vice versa (Jn. 14:31).

Agape is an attribute of God and thus originates with Him.

1 John 4:7-8, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love
does not know God, for God is love.”

God would continue to love even though there were no sinners because His
attribute of love is a part of His divine essence.

God’s love is an attribute but there are two kinds of attributes: (1) Absolute or
intrinsic: those attributes that God possesses of Himself such as life and love. (2)
Relative: those attributes related to His creation and especially men and angels.
For example, by nature God is truth but when God relates that truth to man, God’s truth becomes faithfulness. Love is one of God’s intrinsic or absolute attributes but when His love is directed towards sinners, it becomes grace and mercy and compassion.

Ephesians 2:4-7 teaches that is “God is rich in mercy” and in “grace” and these riches make it possible for sinners to be saved. We are not saved by God’s love but by His grace and mercy, which are expressions of His love. He treats us in a manner that we don’t deserve and this is made possible because of the spiritual death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the cross. God manifested at the cross, His hatred of sin and His love for sinners. Therefore, one of the attributes or characteristics of God’s love is that it is “merciful” meaning that God is compassionate towards His enemies and pardons them (Eph. 2:1-7). Mercy characterizes God’s love.

Ephesians 2:1-7 teaches that God exercised His attribute of love by being in rich in mercy in raising us up and seating us with Christ at His right hand while we were His enemies and enslaved to the sin nature and the devil.

Ephesians 2:1-9, “Although, all of you were spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The greatest act of love by the God-Man was His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. The agape of God is a gift to mankind since the Lord Jesus Christ is the Father’s gift to mankind and He is the love of God incarnate. The Lord Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate since He is the God-Man (John 1:18).

All men are the objects of God’s impersonal love and all believers are the objects of His personal love. Impersonal meaning that God’s love does not need an attractive object. God’s love is able to love the obnoxious and those who are His enemies even to the point of self-sacrifice.

Personal love means that believers are attractive to God since they have His holiness, the new Christ nature indwelling them. All church age believers are the
objects of God’s love and the beneficiaries of this love. We are objects of God eternal love, which He manifested to us when He sent His Son into the world to die for ours sins so that we might live with Him for eternity. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of the immutable eternal unconditional self-sacrificial love of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Greek adjective agapetos (ἀγαπητός), “beloved” expresses this fact. All church age believers are the beneficiaries of God’s impersonal unconditional self-sacrificial love before salvation (John 3:16). They become the objects of God’s personal love after salvation.

The imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of salvation qualifies the believer to become the objects of God’s personal love. God loves the unbeliever from His own integrity because the unbeliever does not possess the perfect righteousness, which would make them worthy of God’s personal love.

The believer possesses the perfect divine righteousness, which qualifies them to be objects of God’s personal love. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of divine love because he possesses imputed divine righteousness, which makes the believer as holy as God.

Imputed righteousness and eternal life enable the believer to enjoy and experience fellowship with God after salvation.

Before salvation, the believer was the object of God’s “impersonal” love meaning that he was obnoxious and unattractive to God since he was enslaved to the cosmic system of Satan and his old Adamic sin nature and under real spiritual death. At salvation, the believer became the object of God’s “personal” love meaning that the believer is attractive to God since God imputed His righteousness to the believer at the moment he exercised faith alone in Christ alone and is now a child of God and a partaker of the divine nature.

1 John 3:1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

The divine-love of the Trinity expressed itself through three categories of divine grace provision: (1) Antecedent grace: Election, Predestination, and Escrow Blessings (2) Living grace: Provisions to live the spiritual life. (3) Eschatological grace: Resurrection body, rewards, and Escrow Blessings.

The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His work in eternity past on behalf of every church age believer: (1) Election (2) Predestination (3) Escrow Blessings (i.e. eternal inheritance).

The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His work at the cross: (1) Redemption (2) Propitiation (3) Reconciliation.

The divine-love of God the Holy Spirit expressed itself through His work from regeneration to resurrection: (1) Efficacious grace (2) Regeneration (3) Baptism of

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The divine-love of the Trinity expressed itself toward the Christian through the provision of sixty irrevocable gifts for them at the moment of salvation. The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His plan for the incarnation of the Son, which was designed to provide salvation for all mankind. The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His willingness to volunteer His services to execute the incarnation plan of God the Father. The divine-love of the humanity of Christ in hypostatic union expressed itself through His voluntary spiritual death on the cross as a substitute for all mankind. The divine-love of the Holy Spirit expressed itself through His work of making the gospel understandable at the point of salvation and also performing His seven salvation ministries when an individual believes in the Lord Jesus for salvation.

The fact that we are beneficiaries of God’s divine-love before salvation and objects of His personal love after salvation will serve to encourage us when we go through adversity in life and also serves to challenge us to advance to maturity and execute the plan of God. The believer who comprehends and acknowledges that he is the object of God’s love will receive the capacity to love others, even the obnoxious. It is only when the believer realizes and accepts by faith the extent to which God loves him that he can in turn love like God. This gives the believer the capacity to love others as God has loved the human race.

God commands the believer to love his fellow human being.

John 13:34, “A new commandment I give to you, that you self-sacrificially love one another, even as I have self-sacrificially loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have self-sacrificially love for one another.”

John 15:12, “This is my commandment, that you self-sacrificially love one another, just as I self-sacrificially loved you.”

God would never command the believer to love like Himself unless He had already given the believer the capacity to execute the command. The fact that the believer is an object of the Father and the Son’s love provides the believer the capacity to love others and execute these commands.

Once, the believer comes to grips with the fact and accepts by faith that God has loved him, and then he can love those who are obnoxious in his life. He must recognize his own sinfulness and unworthiness before God before he attempts to love others in the manner that the Lord has commanded.

The Holy Spirit reveals to the believer the extent to which God has loved him and he does this through prayer and the study of the Word. The Spirit enlightens the believer regarding the love that has been directed toward him.
All believers are equal before the Cross of Christ. In fact, all men are equal before the Cross of Christ. We are all sinners. The believer must look at himself as no better than the obnoxious person in his life and realize that just like the obnoxious person in his life, that he too, is an obnoxious sinner before God. The believer must experience the love of God in his own life before he can obey the commands to love as Christ has loved all men.

The Holy Spirit enables the believer to experience the love of God in his own life and the Spirit accomplishes this through prayer and the Word of God. The Lord’s love for the believer serves as the strength of the believer’s love for others. As long as the believer does not understand these principles, he will never be able to execute the command to love others as Christ has loved him.

Christ’s love must be imparted to the believer by faith in what the Spirit’s says about Christ’s love in the Word of God. The believer must be rooted and ground in this divine love. This divine love is the source of the believer’s love. Therefore, the Christian who loves God and loves his fellow believer and fellow human being as God through Christ loved him and his fellow believer and fellow human being is exercising or manifesting divine love, God’s love.

The love of Christ for the believer thus serves as the power and motivation to love others. The love that loves like Christ is the sign of true discipleship. As conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus must be the chief mark of the believer’s Christian walk, so love must be the chief mark of that conformity. This takes time. Christian upon being saved cannot love like Christ. He must learn.

The Christian will fail but he must not become disheartened and discouraged but rather depend totally and completely upon God who will perform this great work of reproducing the character and life and love of Christ in them (Phlp. 1:6).

The diligent study of the Word, prayer and meditation upon this love of Christ must be a priority for every believer in order for the love of Christ to be manifested in their life. The believer must meditate and be conscious of his union with Christ and that he can do nothing without Him (Jn. 15:1-11). Therefore, the more the believer spends time in fellowship with the Lord in prayer, the study of the Word, the greater the love of God will manifest in his life-in his thoughts, words and actions.

Living our lives by means of God’s love demands that we obey the Lord’s command in John 13:34 to love one another as He has loved us.

*John 13:34, “A new commandment in example I give to all of you, that all of you divinely love one another, even as I have divinely loved all of you, that all of you also divinely love one another.”*

When we obey the command to love one another as Christ loved, we reflect God’s love. But in order to obey this command we must first prayerfully meditate
upon the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God of the Lord Jesus Christ’s self-sacrificial love for us at the Cross.

**Romans 5:5,** “In fact, this confidence, as an eternal spiritual truth, never disappoints because God’s love is always being poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit.”

Then we must accept by faith the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s self-sacrificial love and service for us, and which faith expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved him. When we obey the command to love one another as Christ loved, we are in effect responding to God’s love for us, which He demonstrated at the cross and by saving us and giving us a new nature and making us His children.

Love for others is motivated by our love for the Lord and our love for the Lord is demonstrated by our obedience to His commands to love one another and our obedience to His commands is the response in our souls to the love, which He exercised towards us.

**1 John 4:7-21,** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

The diligent prayerful and meditative study upon this love of Christ, which is revealed by the Spirit in the Word of God, must be the number one priority for the believer in order for the love of Christ to be manifested and reflected in his life. The more time the believer spends in fellowship with the Lord in prayer, the study
of the Word, the greater the love of God will be manifested and reflected in his life-in his thoughts, words and actions. Therefore, Bible instruction is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Bible instruction is a means to an end and that end is the love of God being reflected in our lives. The apostle Paul taught this principle to Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:5, “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

There are a lot of Christians who have been exposed to Bible teaching for years and thus have a tremendous academic knowledge of the Scriptures but do not have the love of God being reflected in their lives. This is reflected in their relationships with their fellow believers.

This knowledge is a *gnosis*, “an intellectual comprehension, academic knowledge” of the love of God but not an *epignosis*, “experiential knowledge” in the sense that they have not personally encountered the love of God in their own lives. Consequently, they have not been affected by the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God through the process of fellowship of the manner and extent and nature in which God has loved them through the Person and Work of Christ. Their knowledge of the Scriptures is not benefiting them or others since they are not applying this knowledge to themselves or their relationships with their fellow believers.

God’s objective in revealing His love to us at the Cross of Calvary through His Son Jesus Christ was so that we might live according to His love. We must not take our knowledge of the Word of God to boast and serve ourselves but rather to love and serve others as Christ loved and served us. We must not abuse our knowledge of the Word of God to boast or to criticize and tear down others but rather we are to use that knowledge to encourage and build up our fellow believers and correct them in gentleness when need be.

Romans 14:15, “For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.”

Romans 15:1-2, “Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.”

We are not to abuse our spiritual freedom to live for self and be inconsiderate and critical of our fellow believer but rather we are to use our spiritual freedom to love and serve the Lord and our fellow believer as Christ loved and served us.

Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”
Bible instruction is not an end in itself but rather it is a means to an end and that end is the love of God being reflected in our lives. Our knowledge of the Scriptures should be reflected in our relationships with God and each other and if it is not, we are arrogant.

1 Corinthians 8:1, “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

Our love for the Lord and all men should grow each day. This was so important that the apostle Paul made it his habit to pray to the Father that the Philippians love toward God and man would continue to grow.

Philippians 1:9, “Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge.”

This too should be our prayer not only for others but also for ourselves. Without the love of God in our lives, we are living in sin and the darkness of the cosmic system of Satan and are in reality hating our brother. Growing in our love for the Lord and for all men, especially believers should be our main objective in this life for without it, we have wasted our lives here on planet earth. We must not become selfish and self-centered and bitter and resentful towards one another but rather forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us. If we know God’s love by experience, then we would forgive and not be bitter and critical towards our fellow believer.

Ephesians 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Our knowledge of the love of God should be reflected in our relationships with each other. The Bible teaches that God as to His nature, is love.

1 John 4:7-8, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

God is love itself. Love is an attribute of God and thus originates with Him. The love of God is of the very essence of God. God’s character and nature, His Person is love.

2 Corinthians 13:11, “Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

Love is an attribute that helps to compose the essence of the Triune God. Essence means “inner nature, true substance, a person’s qualities or attributes,” and implies being or existence. Some of these qualities of a person are visible and some are invisible. God’s essence is made up of attributes, which are essential
characteristics of the Trinity and without these qualities, God would not be who He is-God. We can only understand God’s essence through His attributes.

The Scriptures teach that God is three co-equal, co-infinite and co-eternal Persons with the same identical essence or attributes (Gen. 1:26; Isa. 6:3, 8; 48:16; John 10:30 cf. Psa. 110:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2). God is one in essence, three in Person. All the invisible attributes of God are always present in Him, but not all are revealed to man at the same time. We understand the personality of God from the Scriptures, which reveal the manifestations of His attributes.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate since He is the God-Man who has explained the character and nature of God, and thus has explained the love of God perfectly since love is an attribute of God (cf. Jn. 1:18).

**John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time; the uniquely born God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”**

The love of God was manifested perfectly to the entire human race through the Father’s sacrifice of His Son at the cross of Calvary and the Son’s willingness to be that sacrifice. God manifested His attribute of love by raising the Christian up when the Christian was under real spiritual death and seating the Christian with Christ at His right hand (Eph. 2:1-10).

The love of God is directly related to the holiness of God. The term holiness has become an obscure term.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines holiness, “the quality or state of being holy; sanctity.” They define sanctity, “sacred or hallowed character.”

One of the definitions that Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary gives for the adjective holy is, “entitled to worship or profound religious reverence because of divine character or origin or connection with God or divinity.”

Therefore, holiness pertains to the absolute perfection of the divine character.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines character, “the aggregate of features and traits that form the apparent individual nature of some person or thing.”

If we paraphrase this definition, and give it a spiritual application we would say that the holiness of God is “the aggregate (i.e. sum total) of perfect features and traits that form the nature of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.”

Thus, God’s holiness is related to all of His divine attributes and if related to all His attributes, then it is directly related to His attribute of love. The holiness of God is simply the harmony of all His perfections or attributes and God’s love is one of those perfections or attributes. Thus, when God’s love was manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death on the Cross, His holiness was as well since the holiness of God is simply the harmony of all His attributes and
God’s love is one of those attributes. In fact, grace is simply the function of the holiness of God (sum total of His divine attributes) toward undeserving mankind.

Webster’s states that character “refers especially to moral qualities, ethical standards, principles and the like.”

If we paraphrase this too and give this a spiritual application, we would say that the character of God emphasizes His “perfect moral qualities, ethical standards and principles.”

The perfect character or holiness of God is the excellence of the divine nature and is the very antithesis to sin, evil, moral blemish or defilement. God’s holiness expresses His purity of His character or moral perfection and excellence. The holiness or perfect character of God is the perfection of the glory of God and every Person of the Trinity and is the rule of all Their actions and relationships with both men and angels.

The Lord Jesus Christ revealed the holiness of God during His First Advent and thus He revealed the love of God in His life. The absolute perfection of God’s holiness or perfect character was revealed perfectly at the Cross and thus His love was perfectly revealed as well at the Cross since the holiness of God is simply the harmony of all His perfections or attributes and God’s love is one of those perfections or attributes.

God’s holiness is expressed in His Word and thus since His holiness is expressed in His Word, so God’s love is as well since the holiness of God is simply the harmony of all His attributes and God’s love is one of those attributes.

Sanctification is all about the believer experiencing fellowship with God and His holiness by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love his fellow believer in the same manner as God loved all men.

The apostle John in his first epistle describes the relationship between living in the holiness of God, experiencing fellowship with God and loving one’s fellow believer as Christ loves.

In 1 John 1:5-2:11, the apostle John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit teaches that the believer who loves his fellow believer in the same manner as Christ loved him, will experience fellowship with God, which he describes as “abiding in Him” and “walking in the light.”

1 John 1:5, “Now, this is the proclamation, which we have heard issue forth from Him and we are imparting at this particular time for the benefit of all of you, namely that God (the Father) is light. In fact, there is absolutely no darkness inherent in Him, none.”

The apostle John’s statement that “God is light” in 1 John 1:5 is designed to refute Gnostic teaching and in particular the Syrian form of Gnosticism, which taught that evil originated from the essence of God.
As language of accommodation, the apostle John under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit is employing a figure of speech here in 1 John 1:5 called an anthropopathism by stating that God is light.

An anthropopathism is language of accommodation through which infinite God reveals Himself to the finite man. It is a figure of speech and is used to ascribe human passions, actions or attributes to God.

Here in 1 John 1:5, God is figured by an inanimate thing, namely, light. The apostle John under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit is ascribing to God the characteristic of light in order to explain to the human frame of reference the perfect character of God. By employing this figure of light, infinite God is explaining or revealing Himself to finite man regarding His perfect eternal character. He is condescending by ascribing the characteristics of light to Himself in order that finite man can understand something about Himself.

The apostle John employs the figure of light here in 1 John 1:5 to describe the holiness of God, which is His absolute perfection of character. The believer cannot experience fellowship with God unless he is as holy as God. This is accomplished positionally at the moment of salvation when the believer received the new Christ nature, which is perfectly holy and cannot sin because it is created in the image of Christ who is holy and is impeccable.

Ephesians 4:24, “and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

The new Christ nature provides the believer the capacity to function in the love of God and experience the holiness of God in his life and Christ-likeness is the production or the result of having a lifestyle of living in the new Christ nature.

The new nature gives the believer the capacity to execute the command to be holy as God is holy.

1 Peter 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’”

God the Holy Spirit would not issue this command to the believer to be as holy as He is unless the believer had the power or capacity to be holy as Him and this capacity God has given to the believer when He gave the believer a new nature at the moment of salvation through regeneration.

The new Christ nature functions when the believer is obedient to the voice of the Spirit, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God. After salvation, the believer can experience the holiness of God and fellowship with God by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love one’s fellow believer in the same manner as He loved.
Experiencing the holiness of God is contingent upon the believer acknowledging his sins when necessary and obeying the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved (cf. Jn. 13:33-35).

1 John 1:5-2:11, “Now, this is the proclamation, which we have heard issue forth from Him and we are imparting at this particular time for the benefit of all of you, namely that God (the Father) is light. In fact, there is absolutely no darkness inherent in Him, none. If, any of us enters into making the claim that we have been experiencing fellowship with Him and yet we have been living in the darkness (of the cosmic system of Satan), then we do lie to ourselves and furthermore, we unequivocally do not obey the truth. On the other hand, if any of us does at any time live in the light (in the presence of the Father by living according to the standards of His holiness) just as He Himself is in essence that light (holy), then, we do experience fellowship with one another (with the Father) and furthermore, the blood of Jesus, His Son does cause us to be purified from each and every sin. If, any of us enters into making the claim that we have never possessed a sin nature, then, we do deceive ourselves and furthermore, the truth is unequivocally not in us. If any of us does at any time confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing. If, any of us enters into making the claim that we have never sinned, then, we make Him out to be a liar and furthermore His Word is unequivocally not in us. My little children, I am providing information in writing at this particular time concerning these things for the benefit of all of you in order that all of you might not enter into committing an act of sin. Now, if anyone does enter into committing an act of sin, then we possess as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus who is the righteous Christ. Furthermore, He Himself is the propitiation with regards to our sins. In fact, He Himself is the propitiation not with regards to our sins only in contrast with the rest of unregenerate humanity, absolutely not, but also with regards to the entire world, without exception and without distinction. Now, by means of this, we can confirm that we know Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) experientially: if any of us at any time does observe conscientiously His (the Lord Jesus Christ’s) commands. The one who at any time does say, ‘I know Him experientially,’ and yet at any time does not observe conscientiously His commands, is a liar and furthermore, the truth is unequivocally not in him. But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him. The one who at any time does say, ‘I am abiding in Him,’ in the same manner He (the Lord Jesus Christ) lived, likewise, he himself must live. Divinely loved ones, I am by no
means providing information in writing at this particular time regarding an unfamiliar command to all of you but rather a familiar command, which all of you have been subjected to from the beginning (of your Christian indoctrination). This familiar command is the doctrine, which all of you heard through instruction. Again, in another sense, I am providing information in writing at this particular time to all of you regarding a new command in example and experience, which is true as manifested in Him (Christ) as well as in all of you with the result that the darkness is at this particular time, passing away. In fact, the true Light (holiness of God) is at this particular time shining in the sense of being reflected (by obedient believers). The one who at any time does say, ‘I am living in the light’ and yet at any time hates his spiritual brother is living in the darkness up to the present moment. The one who at any time does divinely love his spiritual brother is abiding in the light. Furthermore, there is unequivocally no cause of stumbling in him. But the one who at any time does hate his spiritual brother is mentally in the darkness. Consequently, he is living in the darkness. Furthermore, he unequivocally does not know for certain where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

“Unfamiliar” is the adjective kainos (καινός), which does not mean “new in time” or “new in the sense of originating with John.” But rather it is used with the emphatic negative particle ouk, “not” and means, “new in the sense of being unfamiliar” since John goes on to state that his readers have heard this command from the beginning of their Christian instruction. Thus, John is stating here in 1 John 2:7 that he is by no means presenting to his readers an “unfamiliar” command meaning a command that they haven’t heard taught before. On the contrary, it is a command that they have heard from the beginning of their indoctrination to the Christian way of life, thus it is a “familiar” command in that sense.

“Familiar” is the adjective palaios (παλαίος), which in context means, “familiar” since it is used in contrast with kainos, “unfamiliar” and John states that his readers have heard this commandment from the beginning of their Christian indoctrination.

The Old Testament command to love one’s neighbor in Leviticus 19:18 is not in view in the context of 1 John 2:7. Rather, the command of the Lord Jesus Christ in our Lord’s Upper Room Discourse in John 13-17 is being referred to by John here in the context of 1 John 2:7.

John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
John 15:12-13, “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

1 John 1:5-2:11 clearly indicates that the believer who does not love his fellow believer in the same manner as Christ loved him is not walking in the light.

“Abiding in the light” is a figure for experiencing the holiness of God and fellowship with God and if the believer does not love his fellow believer in the same manner as Christ loved, he is not experiencing fellowship with God nor is he experiencing the holiness of God. Therefore, the believer experiences the holiness of God in his life by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love one another as He has loved all men.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, “Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”

Now, the greatest demonstration of God’s love in history took place two thousand years ago at the Cross of Calvary when the Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily suffered spiritual death (loss of fellowship with the Father in His human nature) as a substitute for every human being in human history-past, present and future.

Romans 5:6-8, “For while, we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still helpless, still, at that particular appointed moment in history, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of the ungodly. For, it is unlikely, anyone will die as a substitute for the benefit of a righteous person. In fact, possibly, someone might also have the courage to voluntarily die as a substitute for the benefit of the good person. But, God (the Father), as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, proves His own divine-love for the benefit of all of us by the fact that while we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still sinners, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of all of us.”

At the Cross, God the Father imputed to the impeccable human nature of Christ on the Cross, every sin in human history-past, present and future and as a result of this imputation, our Lord became a curse for us and was judged in our place.

Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.’”

The judgment that the Lord Jesus Christ in His perfect human nature experienced was the loss of fellowship with His Father during those last three hours of supernatural darkness on the Cross, which constituted spiritual death.

Matthew 27:45-46, “Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud
voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY
GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”

The anguish that our Lord experienced in His soul during those last three hours
on the Cross served as the propitiation for every sin in human history meaning that
the Father was satisfied with our Lord’s spiritual death as the payment for every
sin in history.

Isaiah 53:10-11, “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to
grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in
His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as
He will bear their iniquities.”

The Father had to forsake the Son because He is holy meaning that God cannot
tolerate sin, therefore, the perfect Lamb of God had to be separated from the Father
during those last three hours on the Cross in order that we might never be separated
from the Father.

Psalm 22:1-3, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from
my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but
You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest. Yet You are holy, O You
who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”

Therefore, the greatest and most profound expression of the love for God and
all men in the universe was the Lord Jesus Christ’s obedience to the Father’s will
since obedience to the Father’s will is the supreme test of our love for Him. The
test of the Son’s love for the Father was His obedience to the Father’s will even to
the point of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Philippians 2:5-8, “Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility)
within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although
existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing
equally in essence with God an exploitable asset. On the contrary, He denied
Himself of the independent function of His divine attributes by having
assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men. In
fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He
humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual
death even death on a Cross.”

The obedient love of the Lord Jesus to the Father’s will serves as the pattern for
the believer’s spiritual life after salvation. The perfect example of the love of God
was at the Cross where both the Father and the Son loved you and I so much that
They were willing to sacrifice something they both infinitely valued, namely,
fellowship with One Another.
The Lord Jesus loved us all so much in that He was willing to sacrifice something He loved and cherish, namely fellowship with His Father. He loved us so much in that He was willing to be separated from His Father during those last three hours of darkness on the Cross when He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The Father loved us so much in that He was willing to sacrifice His “beloved” Son to redeem us and reconcile us to Himself. Our Lord’s obedience did not go unrewarded since He was promoted to the right hand of the Father as a result of His perfect obedience to the Father’s will.

Philippians 2:9-11, “For this very reason in fact God the Father has promoted Him to the highest-ranking position and has awarded to Him the rank, which is superior to every rank. In order that in the sphere of this rank possessed by Jesus every person must bow, celestials and terrestrials and sub-terrestrials. Also, every person must publicly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father.”

The believer who follows in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ will be promoted as well and will receive his eternal inheritance (Heb. 6:10). The Father draws a human being to Himself through His love that was demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross (Jn. 12:20-33). Some men are attracted to the love of God as manifested through the Cross of Christ whereas others stumble over Christ and His cross and others consider it ridiculous.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24, “but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

He loved His sheep so much that He gave His life for the sheep.

John 10:14-15, “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

The Lord loved His disciples who He calls His friends so much that He gave His life for them.

John 13:1, “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”

John 15:12-13, “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

The Lord Jesus Christ set the example in loving each other. Therefore, His love serves as the source, the power and the motivation for the Christian to love his fellow Christian in the same manner Christ loved, no matter how obnoxious or
unattractive our fellow believer might become. The Lord provides us with the perfect human example of love in every way, manner, degree, extent, and purpose.

The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His work in eternity past on behalf of every church age believer: (1) Election (2) Predestination (3) Eternal inheritance) (Eph. 1:1-14).

The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His work in time at the Cross:

Redemption: The Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross-purchased the entire human race out from the slave market of sin with His substitutionary spiritual death (Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Propitiation: The Lord Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness of God with His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross-as the payment for our sins (Lev. 1; 16; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10).

Reconciliation: God’s peace treaty with the entire human race as a result of the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ the Cross which removed the Barrier which separated mankind from God (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20-21).

Mediatorship of Christ: Our Lord as the God-Man is the Peacemaker or Mediator between God and man (Eph. 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:5).

At the present time, the Lord Jesus Christ is expressing His divine-love towards the believer through His Advocacy for the believer at the right hand of the Father where He defends the believer against the accusations of Satan.

1 John 2:1, “My little children, I am providing information in writing at this particular time concerning these things for the benefit of all of you in order that all of you might not enter into committing an act of sin. Now, if anyone does enter into committing an act of sin, then we possess as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus who is the righteous Christ.”

The divine-love of God the Holy Spirit expresses itself through His seven salvation ministries on behalf of the believer:

Efficacious Grace: Makes faith in Jesus Christ effective for salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9).

Regeneration: Creates a human spirit for the purpose of the imputation of eternal life (John 3:1-16; Titus 3:5).

Baptism of the Spirit: Places every believer in union with Jesus Christ (John 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Indwelling: Creates a temple for the indwelling of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16).

Filling: Influences the soul of the believer in executing the plan of God for the church age (Eph. 5:18).

Sealing: Puts His stamp on the believer to guarantee his salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).
Distribution of Spiritual Gifts: Gives every believer a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:10).

God the Holy Spirit’s post-salvation ministries on behalf of the believer:
Empowers the believer to execute the plan of God (Jo. 14:16, 26; Ga. 5:16, 25; Eph. 5:18; Phlp. 2:13).
Reproduces Christ-like character (fruit of the Spirit) in the believer (Ga. 4:19; 5:5, 16-23).
Teaches the believer the doctrines of Christ (Jo. 14:26; 1 Co. 2:10-16; 1 Jo. 2:20, 27).
The fact that we are beneficiaries of God’s divine-love before salvation and objects of His personal love after salvation is designed to not only bless us but also to encourage us when we go through adversity in life and also serves to challenge us to advance to maturity and execute the plan of God.


God’s love is sacrificial.

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

God’s love is impersonal meaning that God does not need an attractive object to love since He simply loves from His own nature.

Romans 5:8, “But, God (the Father), as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, proves His own divine-love for the benefit of all of us by the fact that while we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still sinners, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of all of us.”

God’s love is immutable meaning that is never changes.

Micah 7:18-20, “Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have
compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old.”

God’s love is eternal meaning it has not beginning and no end and is ever present.

John 17:24, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

God’s love is unconditional and faithful.

Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God’s love is “forgiving” (Eph. 4:32-5:2). God’s love is “tolerant” of others (Eph. 4:2). It love intercedes for others in prayer (Jam. 5:16). God’s love is “merciful” meaning that God is compassionate towards His enemies and pardons them (Eph. 2:1-7). It love is “forgiving” meaning that if we live according to God’s love we will pardon those who have sinned against us just as God in Christ granted us a free pardon and gave us the remission of our sins based upon the merits of the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross (Eph. 4:32-5:2).

God’s love is “tolerant” meaning that if we live according to God’s love we will be able to put up with or endure with those whose opinions differ from one’s own (Eph. 4:2). It love is also “impersonal” meaning that God can love from His own divine nature sinners who are obnoxious and unattractive to Him. It love is “giving” meaning that God in His love provided the entire human race eternal life as a gift, voluntarily and without expecting any compensation in return (John 3:16; Gal. 2:20).

God’s love is “immutable” meaning that His love for us can never change (Rm. 8:39). It love is “unconditional” meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits after salvation or how unfaithful the believer is after salvation, God will never ever disown the believer (Rm. 8:35, 39).

God’s love is “faithful” meaning that He is true or eternally bound to His promise to save us through faith alone in Christ alone and keep us saved (Rm. 8:35, 39). It love is “loyal” meaning that He is faithful to His promise to give us eternal salvation and is unswerving in His allegiance to us (John 21:7, 15-16, 20; Rom. 8:35, 39; Eph. 5:28).

God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17). It love is “righteous” meaning that He is fair (Rm. 13:8-10). God’s love is “just”
meaning that His love is based upon truth, justice and fairness (Rm. 13:8-10). It love “encourages” others meaning that the one who operates in the love of God will inspire with confidence others and stimulate others by assistance and approval (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11).

God’s love “reciprocates” meaning that believers operating in God’s love will have a mutual exchange of care and concern for one another and will compliment one another gracefully and will return love for one another (Phlp. 1:3-7). It love is “sincere” meaning that if we live according to God’s love we will be free from hypocrisy, deceit and will be genuine and real (1 Pet. 1:21-22).

God’s love is “magnanimous” meaning that the believer who lives according to God’s love will be generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness.

Magnanimity is the quality of being magnanimous which is the quality of being generous in forgiving an insult or injury without being pellitory resentful or vindictive. It is being noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law.

A believer who is magnanimous is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He is generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, and noble. He does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice.

The magnanimous behavior of a believer manifests one of the characteristics of Christ who was generous and gracious in forgiving and tolerant in the face of insults. It is a manifestation of the Spirit and the Word’s work in the life of a believer.

Magnanimous behavior among believers will resolve personality conflicts. Magnanimity is an expression of the love of God and when exercised by believers among themselves will produce unity in the local assembly.

**Colossians 3:14,** “Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

**Philippians 4:5,** “Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.”

“Gentle spirit” is the articular nominative neuter singular form of the adjective *epieikes* (ἐπιεῖκες).

The adjective *epieikes* in the Greek New Testament expresses the concept of magnanimity and is a compound word composed of the preposition *epi*, “upon” and the adjective *eikos*, “reasonable, probable.”

The adjective *epieikes* and the noun *epieikeia* are both derived from *eikos*, “becoming, decent,” or from *eiko*, “to yield, give way,” and mean from Homer
onwards “the proper way of life,” or from Thucydides onwards “forbearance, indulgence, mildness.”

*Epieikes*, together with its derivatives, was originally an expression for the balanced, intelligent, decent in outlook in contrast to licentiousness. Then it was used for a considerate, thoughtful attitude in legal relationships, which was prepared to mitigate the rigors of justice, with its laws and claims, in contrast to the attitude, which demands that rights, including one’s own, should be upheld at all costs. It is opposed to unbridled anger, harshness, brutality and self-expression. It represents character traits of the noble-minded, the wise man who remains meek in the face of insults, the judge who is lenient in judgment, and the king who is kind in his rule. Hence, it appears often in pictures of the ideal ruler and in eulogies on men in high positions.

*Epieikes* expresses moderation or kindness towards men. *Praotes*, which is also translated “gentleness” in the English translations pertains more to the attitude of the individual, whereas *epieikeia* is related to the outward conduct of the individual. *Praotes* is unrestricted divine whereas *epieikeia* is directed towards others.

The adjective *epieikes* appears only 8 times in the LXX. Each time it translates *sallach*. The adjective *epieikes* is found 5 times in the NT (Phlp. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18). Its cognate noun *epieikeia* is found twice in Acts 24:4; 2 Cor. 10:1.

The adjective *epieikes* in the NT denotes one who is magnanimous in their behavior.

The New Universal Unabridged Dictionary lists the following definitions for the adjective magnanimous: (1) Generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness: to be magnanimous towards one’s enemies. (2) High-minded; noble: a magnanimous king (3) Proceeding from or revealing nobility of mind, character, etc: a magnanimous love of justice.

If we paraphrase this definition and apply it to the Christian, we would say that he must be: (1) Generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness especially towards one’s enemies. (2) High-minded; noble (3) Possessing nobility of mind, character, having a magnanimous love of justice.

Magnanimous behavior is one of the expressions of divine-love, which as we have noted has two directions: (1) Vertical: Directed toward God. (2) Horizontal: Directed toward mankind.

The vertical, motivational divine love of a believer produces the horizontal, functional divine love directed toward all mankind.

The Lord Jesus Christ is magnanimous and the apostle Paul wants the Philippian believer’s to follow suit. Magnanimous behavior among the Philippian
believers will resolve the personality conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. If they were magnanimous with each other in the first place, there would not have been a problem between the two.

Therefore, our corrected translation of Philippians 4:5 should read as follows: 

**Philippians 4:5, “Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord is immanently near.”**

Magnanimity is related to forgiveness (Col. 3:13-14). God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are inherently magnanimous. It is one of their attributes. The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1st Advent revealed this magnanimous character of the Trinity. The greatest manifestation of God’s magnanimity was at the Cross when every sin in human history, past, present and future was imputed to Christ on the Cross and He was judged as our substitute. Our Lord’s magnanimous behavior was demonstrated during His 1st Advent by the manner in which He demonstrated the quality of being generous in forgiving insults and injury without being pettily resentful or vindictive.

**Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.’”**

He was noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. The Lord was generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He was generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, and noble. He did not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice.

The believer’s forgiveness of others is a manifestation of his divine love. The forgiveness of God originates from His very nature. The Old Testament possesses a variety of rich language to describe God’s forgiveness. God is proclaimed as a merciful and forgiving God (Ps. 103:12; Is. 38:17; 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Mic. 7:19; cf. Lk. 15:11-24).

The Levitical animal sacrifices in the Old Testament depicted the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the cross, which is the basis for the forgiveness of sins. The blood of the animal portrayed the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the cross, which is the basis for the forgiveness of sins.

**Hebrews 9:22, “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”**

The forgiveness of sins is offered to the entire human race by God the Father based upon the merits of the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of His Son, the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the Cross.

A person appropriates by means of faith alone in Christ alone the forgiveness of his sins.
Colossians 1:13-14, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

From the earliest mention of forgiveness, the Lord has never discounted nor overlooked our sins. He forgives us because Christ made restitution. Though God made the restitution for us, it was still required to obtain God’s forgiveness. To put it the opposite way: without the restitution payment of Jesus Christ, there would be no forgiveness!

God bases His forgiveness or receipt of His pardon upon the restitution for sins that Christ voluntarily made for the world. There would be no forgiveness of sins if Christ had not propitiated the Father.

1 John 2:1-2, “My little children, I am providing information in writing at this particular time concerning these things for the benefit of all of you in order that all of you might not enter into committing an act of sin. Now, if anyone does enter into committing an act of sin, then we possess as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus who is the righteous Christ. Furthermore, He Himself is the propitiation with regards to our sins. In fact, He Himself is the propitiation not with regards to our sins only in contrast with the rest of unregenerate humanity, absolutely not, but also with regards to the entire world, without exception and without distinction.”

Unbelievers are not judged according to their sins at the Great White Throne Judgment but rather are judged according to their self-righteous human good works, which do not measure up to the perfect work of the impeccable Christ on the Cross. Therefore the unbeliever goes to the lake of fire because of his rejection of Christ (Rev. 20:11-15).

1 Timothy 2:4 and John 3:16-17 clearly indicates that God desires all men to be saved. Therefore, He has made provision for the forgiveness of sins and thus for all men to be saved through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The believer who confesses his personal sins to the Father is promised the forgiveness of his sins and is restored to fellowship immediately upon doing so.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

The believer is restored to fellowship because of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross and thus the Father is faithful and just to forgive the believer his sins. The believer is both object and the subject of forgiveness.

There are two categories of forgiveness: (1) Forgiveness of personal sins by God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ at the cross. (2) Forgiveness of others as a function of divine-love under the royal family honor code.
Our forgiveness of one another is based upon God’s forgiveness of us, therefore the believer is both the object and the subject of forgiveness. Not only is the believer the object of God’s forgiveness but also he has now become the subject of forgiveness since he is to exhibit the same attitude toward others as God has displayed towards him. Since the believer is the object of God’s forgiveness, he is obligated to forgive his fellow believer in the same manner as God in Christ has forgiven him.

Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, put on as the elect of God, separate and beloved, compassionate affections, graciousness, wisdom, humility, patient-endurance; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint another, even as the Lord Christ forgave all of you, so also you should forgive others.”

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

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to forgive and practiced it (Matt, 18:21-35). He exhibited a forgiving attitude on the cross while enduring the greatest suffering that any member of the human race has ever had to endure in history when He received the imputation of the sins of the entire world as well tremendous verbal and physical abuse from other members of the human race.

The believer who does not acknowledge his unforgiving attitude towards others will not be forgiven by God meaning that the believer will not be restored to fellowship with Him if he does not acknowledge to the Father his unforgiving attitude toward others.

Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive men their failures (acknowledging your own sin to the Father and forgive others), Your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their failures (failure to acknowledge your own sin to the Father and forgive others), neither will the Father forgive you (restoration to fellowship), your failures.”

Our Lord set all precedence for the attitude that the believer is to possess in life, which is to always maintain an attitude of forgiveness towards others (Luke 23:24).

His forgiving attitude on the cross while enduring the greatest suffering of any member of the human race in history set all precedence for the believer in the church age. The believer finds the capacity to forgive others when he accepts by the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God that God in Christ has forgiven him and only then will he have the capacity to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven all men.

God’s forgiveness in Christ serves as the believer’s power and motivation to forgive others. The believer who can forgive others who have injured him or someone that they love is manifesting the power of God in their lives and is revealing Christ to others with their attitude. They are in reality revealing the
Shekinah Glory of God Who is Christ, which is the same Glory that Moses desired to see (Ex. 33:18-19; 34:34:6-7).

The local assembly cannot advance as a spiritual combat unit without each member putting into practice the doctrine of forgiveness. It is not enough to know the doctrine of forgiveness but it is practicing forgiveness, which manifests to others that you are the Lord’s student (John 13:34-35).

Forgiveness is essential in every human relation: (1) Local Assembly (2) Marriages (3) Friendships.

The church age believer must always keep in mind when involved in any type of relationship whether marriage, the church, friendships or business that if God the Father forgave him through Christ, he in turn is obligated to forgive others without exception.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, the apostle Paul provides us with some of the characteristics of God’s love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-4, “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant.”

“Is patient” is the verb makrothumeo (μακροθυμεῖν). If the believer lives according to God’s love, he will be “patient” in the sense that he will endure provocation, annoyance, misfortune, pain without complaint, loss of temper, and will possess the ability and willingness to suppress restlessness and annoyance in waiting for God.

“Is kind” is the verb chresteuomai (χρηστεύομαι). If the believer lives according to God’s love, he will be “kind” in the sense that he will exercise a sympathetic attitude towards others and will possess a willingness to do good to others and be helpful and considerate towards others.

“Is not jealous” is composed of the emphatic negative particle ouk (οὐκ) and the verb zeloo (ζηλοῦν). The believer who lives according to God’s love will not be “jealous” of others in the sense that he will not become resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships.

“Is not arrogant” is composed of the emphatic negative particle ouk (οὐκ) and the verb phusioo (φυσίον). The believer who lives according to God’s love will not be “arrogant” or “proud” meaning that he will not have an exaggerated belief in his own importance and will not think or act as if he is superior to others.
1 Corinthians 13:5, “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered.”

“Does not act unbecomingly” is the emphatic negative particle *ouk* (οὐκ), “not” and the verb *aschemoneo* (ἀσχημονέω), which means “to behave indecently, dishonorably, disgracefully.”

The believer who operates in the love of God will do nothing, which would cause shame or disgrace and will be tactful and courteous.

“It does not seek its own” means that the God’s love is “unselfish” and thus is not concerned with one’s own interests, and concerns and is not without concern for others.

God’s love considers others more important than oneself (Phlp. 2:3).

Philippians 2:3-4, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

“Is not provoked” means that God’s love is not “touchy” in the sense that it does not get exasperated with others or easily offended by others and is not provoked to anger and the loss of temper by the actions of others.

“Does not take into account a wrong suffered” meaning that if we live according to God’s love we will not keep a record of wrongs that others have committed against us in the past and therefore it denotes the concept of not holding grudges and not possessing an unforgiving spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:6, “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.”

“Does not rejoice in unrighteousness,” means that if we live according to God’s love we will not rejoice in those things (whether moral or immoral) in the cosmic system of Satan, which reject God’s Word.

“Rejoices with the truth,” means that the believer who lives according to the love of God will rejoice in the Word of God being taught regardless of who the communicator is.

1 Corinthians 13:7, “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

“Bears” is the verb *stego* (στήγω), which originally meant “to cover over,’ and then, “to contain as a vessel.”

From this latter meaning two metaphorical uses of the word are derived. either of which may be here adopted: (a) that love hides or is silent about the faults of others; (b) that love bears without resentment injuries inflicted by others. Therefore, there are two major dimensions to love’s consistent capacity to “hold up” rather than “fold up.”

First, love bears up silently; that is, love covers sin with a cloak of silence.
1 Peter 4:8, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

Love always bears up, no matter how great the persecution, suffering, or adversity. Job’s wife “tempted” him to sin by urging him to “curse God and die,” thus bringing his suffering to a conclusion. Love never caves in or collapses under duress and always holds up.

“Believes all things,” means that if we live according to the love of God we will trust in God’s care for us no matter how terrible the adversity we are going through or the circumstances surrounding us.

“Hopes all things” means that if we live according to the love of God we will have “confidence” in God because of our eternal relationship with Him, no matter how terrible the adversity we are facing or the circumstances surrounding us.

“Endures all things,” means that God’s love will persevere and endure adversity without complaining.

1 Corinthians 13:8, “Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.”

“Love never fails,” means that God’s love is eternal and will endure forever. God’s love is “eternal” meaning it has not beginning and no end and is ever present (John 17:26).

1 Corinthians 13:9-13, “For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

If we compare 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 with the “fruit of the Spirit” recorded in Galatians 5:22-23, we will see that all of the characteristics of God’s love show up in that fruit.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Each element in the fruit of the Spirit is but a different facet of divine love. Joy is love’s song. Peace is love’s repose. Patience is love’s endurance. Kindness is love’s sympathy. Goodness is love’s self-forgetfulness. Gentleness is love’s forbearance. Faithfulness is love’s trustworthiness. Self-control is love’s discipline.

Several of these characteristics of God’s love are directly related to the believer’s eternal security. God’s love is also “impersonal” meaning that when the believer becomes obnoxious and unattractive to God after salvation by living in his
old Adamic sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan, God is still able to love the believer from His own integrity and will never disown the believer.

God’s love is also “unconditional” meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits after salvation or how unfaithful the believer is after salvation, God will never ever disown the believer.

God will discipline His children for sin if they do not confess sin but God will never disown His children.

Hebrews 12:6, “FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

Therefore, the “impersonal” and “unconditional” characteristics of God’s love are directly related to the eternal security of the believer.

We have eternal security, as believers because God’s love is impersonal and unconditional meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits after salvation God will never ever disown the believer.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught this principle to His disciples in His parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). The fact that God’s love is unconditional insures the fact that the believer can never lose his salvation because of any act of sin since God judged His Son for every sin in human history at the cross-past, present and future because of His great love for all men (Rm. 5:6-11).

If the believer could lose his salvation for a sin that Christ was already judged for as our Substitute, then God would be unjust and would not be acting in accordance with His own perfect virtue and integrity. Therefore, He would not be acting in love and since God is love, He would be denying Himself or who and what He is.

For God to deny Himself by disowning the believer for any sin he commits after salvation would be impossible since God’s love is “immutable” meaning that it never changes towards us.

Because God is immutable, His love is immutable.

Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Because His Son was judged as our Substitute at the cross, the Father was free to render the believer justified when he exercised faith in His Son for salvation and He would be unfair if He rescinded that decision that He made at the moment of salvation.

Romans 5:1-2, “Therefore, because we have been justified by means of faith as a source, we, as an eternal spiritual truth, always have peace in the presence of God through our Lord who is Jesus, who is the Christ. Through whom also, we have as a permanent possession access to this gracious benefit in which we forever stand and in addition we make it a habit to rejoice upon the confident expectation of sharing God’s glory.”
The believer has eternal security because he is in union with Christ.

Romans 8:1, “Therefore, there is now, as an eternal spiritual truth, never any condemnation, none whatsoever for the benefit of those in union with Christ who is Jesus.”

If the believer could lose his salvation for any sin he committed after salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ would in effect be lying since He said the following:

John 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Because God is love is based upon truth, He will never lie to us.

Hebrews 6:17-18, “In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.”

God would be denying Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ would be a liar if the believer could lose his salvation through any act of sin he committed after salvation (Jn. 17:12; 2 Tim. 2:11-13).

As we noted God’s love is “faithful.”

Psalm 31:23-24, “O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.”

2 Thessalonians 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

God’s love is faithful, unconditional, impersonal, immutable and truthful towards the believer after salvation no matter how unfaithful the believer becomes after salvation because love is who God is.

1 John 4:16, “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

Therefore, there is nothing after salvation the believer could do that would separate him from the love of God (Rm. 8:28-39). To say that you can lose your salvation is to say that God does not love you and if that is the case, then God is not love. Therefore, the believer’s salvation is as strong as the love of God.

Mark 12:28-31 illustrates for us the directions of love.

Mark 12:28-30, “One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the foremost of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, ‘HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.’ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”

“Love” is the verb *agapao* (ἀγαπάω), which refers to the act of honoring, respecting, revering and being dedicated and devoted to God to the point of self-sacrifice. This act is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to God’s revelation of Himself since the believer has been created and redeemed for God’s purpose and good pleasure.

Mark 12:30 indicates that the believer is to love God with his entire being, with his *kardia*, “heart,” *psuche*, “soul,” *dianoia*, “mind,” and *ischus*, “strength.”

The Christian expresses his love for God by being obedient to God.

John 14:21-24, “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.”

Mark 12:31, “The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

“Love” is the verb *agapao* (ἀγαπάω), which refers to the act of honoring and respecting your fellow human being to the point of self-sacrifice. This act is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to his fellow human being since both he and his fellow human being were created by God, according to His image of God and redeemed at the Cross.

We cannot love our neighbor as we do ourselves until we first learn to love ourselves. We cannot love ourselves until we first love God because it is only when we love God that we learn how much He loves us.
When we comprehend how much He loves us, this will give us the capacity to fulfill the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. The believer who comprehends and acknowledges and accepts by faith that he is the object of God’s love will receive the capacity to love others, even the obnoxious. It is only when the believer realizes the extent to which God loves him that he can in turn love like God.

God commands the believer to love his fellow human being. As we have noted God would never command the believer to love like Himself unless He had already given the believer the capacity to execute the command.

The fact that the believer is an object of the Father and the Son’s love provides the believer the capacity to love others and execute these commands. Every believer knows how impossible and difficult, it often is to love people, who are many times obnoxious and abrasive and argumentative but before going out and meeting people like this, the believer must go in secret to the Lord.

The believer must enter into prayerful and meditative study of the Word, asking himself, with his eyes fixed on his own unworthiness and sin before the Lord, how much he owes Him. The believer must acknowledge and accept by faith that he was loved while he was obnoxious to God and that God has forgiven Him much and has been patient and tolerant toward him and has bore with his disobedience.

Once, the believer comes to grips with the fact and accepts by faith that God has loved him, and then he can love those who are obnoxious in his life. He must recognize his own sinfulness and unworthiness before God before he attempts to love others in the manner that the Lord has commanded.

The Holy Spirit reveals to the believer the extent to which God has loved him and he does this through prayer and the study of the Word. The Spirit enlightens the believer regarding the love that has been directed toward him (Eph. 3:14-21).

The believer must look at himself as no better than the obnoxious person in his life and realize that just like the obnoxious person in his life, that he too, is an obnoxious sinner before God. The believer must experience the love of God in his own life before he can obey the commands to love as Christ has loved all men.

The Holy Spirit enables the believer to experience the love of God in his own life and the Spirit accomplishes this through prayer and the Word of God. The Lord’s love for the believer serves as the strength of the believer’s love for others.

As long as the believer does not understand these principles, he will never be able to execute the command to love others as Christ has loved him. Christ’s love must be imparted to the believer by the Holy Spirit in prayer and the study of the Word of God.

Romans 5:5, “In fact, this confidence, as an eternal spiritual truth, never disappoints because God’s love is always being poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit.”
The believer must be rooted and ground in this divine love since this divine love is the source of the believer’s love. We are to love the Lord who we can’t see in our fellow believer who we can see.

Matthew 25:39-40, “When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

The vertical and the horizontal aspect of agape, “divine-love” are inseparable since the vertical aspect is accomplished through the horizontal or in other words, our love for the Lord is demonstrated by our love for our fellow believer and fellow human being. The believer does not love God, who he can’t see, if he does not love his fellow believer who he can see (1 Jn. 4:7-21).

The believer who obeys the Lord demonstrates his love for the Lord. If you love the Lord you will obey Him.

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

“Keep” is the verb tereo (τηρέω). In John 14:15, the verb tereo means, “to observe conscientiously.” To observe means, “to conform one’s action or practice to, to comply with.” To be conscientious means to “careful, thoughtful, heedful, attentive, meticulous.” Thus, the Lord Jesus is stating that if His disciples “observe conscientiously” His commandments in the sense of being careful, thoughtful, heedful, attentive, meticulous in conforming their actions in compliance with them, then they are as an eternal spiritual truth loving Him in the sense of honoring and respecting Him.

The concept of obedience is obviously implied in the word’s meaning although it does not specifically mean, “to obey.”

John 14:21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Once again the verb tereo, “to observe conscientiously” appears in John 14:21 and 23. The obedient believer will become intimate with the Lord and will receive greater revelation and insight into the Lord and His ways and this is indicated by the phrase “will disclose Myself to him.”

John 14:23, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will observe conscientiously My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

John 14:24 states emphatically that the believer who does not observe conscientiously the Lord’s Word does not love Him in the sense that they do not honor and respect Him.

John 14:24, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”

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Obedience to the will of God not only demonstrates one’s love for God but also is absolutely essential in order to experience fellowship with God.

John 15:10-11, “If you observe conscientiously My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

1 John 2:3-4, “Now, by means of this, we can confirm that we know Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) experientially: if any of us at any time does observe conscientiously His (the Lord Jesus Christ’s) commands. The one who at any time does say, ‘I know Him experientially,’ and yet at any time does not observe conscientiously His commands, is a liar and furthermore, the truth is unequivocally not in him.”

Therefore, the test of fellowship with God is obedience. Obedience begins with the believer’s thought process, which must be conformed to the will of the Father (Rm. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). This obedience will then manifest itself in the believer’s words and actions since thought precedes word and action and will serve as a protection for the soul against false doctrine that is propagated by the kingdom of darkness.

2 Corinthians 10:5-6, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”

Obedience to Bible doctrine purifies the soul.

1 Peter 1:22-23, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”

Obedience on the part of the believer demands denying what self wants in exchange for what God wants. Denying self-means sacrificing even legitimate things in life such as family, friends and other relationships in order to accomplish the Father’s will.

Remember what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples:

Luke 14:26-27, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

If you love God, you will deny self and take up your cross and you cannot love God without first denying self. Self-sacrifice springs from self-denial.

Luke 9:23-24, “And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”
For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

The perfect example of the love of God was at the Cross where both the Father and the Son loved you and I so much that They were willing to sacrifice something they both infinitely valued, namely, fellowship with one another. The Lord Jesus loved us all so much in that He was willing to sacrifice something He loved and cherish, namely fellowship with His Father. He loved us so much in that He was willing to be separated from His Father during those last three hours of darkness on the Cross when He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The test of the Son’s love for the Father was His obedience to the Father’s will even to the point of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Our Lord’s obedience did not go unrewarded. The humanity of Christ was promoted to the right hand of the Father as a result of His perfect obedience to the Father’s will.

Philippians 2:9-11, “For this very reason in fact God the Father has promoted Him to the highest-ranking position and has awarded to Him the rank, which is superior to every rank. In order that in the sphere of this rank possessed by Jesus every person must bow, celestials and terrestrials and sub-terrestrials. Also, every person must publicly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father.”

Our Lord’s obedience to the Father will was to such an extent that He was willing not only to become a human being but also to suffer substitutionary spiritual death as an impeccable Person receiving the imputation of the sins of the entire universe and be judged for them by the justice of God the Father.

Our Lord’s obedience was the greatest expression of love for the Father in both angelic and human history by virtue of His unique person as the sinless God-Man. The believer who follows in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ will be promoted as well and will receive his eternal inheritance. Although, God will test our love and loyalty to Him by asking us at times to sacrifice that which is near and dear to us, He will in the end reward us as He did His Son.

Hebrews 6:10, “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”

The believer acquires the capacity to obey the Father’s will to the point of self-sacrifice by responding in faith to the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God, of the Father and the Son’s self-sacrificial love at the Cross for him and making personal application of this love.

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

Obedience is the supreme test of our love for the Lord. Abraham is a perfect example of a believer who demonstrated His love for the Lord by His obedience. There were four great crises in the life of Abraham, which tested his love and
obedience to the Lord. He loved the Lord to such an extent that he was willing to sacrifice relationships that were near and dear to him.

Abraham obeyed the Lord and left behind his parents (Heb. 11:8-10). Abraham left his nephew Lot in Genesis 13 and he obeyed the Lord and gave up Ishmael whom he loved dearly (Gen. 21:12-14). Lastly, Abraham was commanded by God to sacrifice the son of promise, the child who he and Sarah had waited so long to have.

Abraham loved the Lord so much that he was obedient to the Lord’s command to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. Abraham is an illustration of the Father and Isaac an illustration of the Lord Jesus.

Abraham loved the Lord so much that like the Father, he was willing to sacrifice his child, namely, his beloved son, Isaac and Isaac loved his father so much that like the Lord Jesus, he willingly laid himself down upon the altar as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-18).

So we can see that obedience is the supreme test of our love for the Lord.

1 John 5:3, “For this is the love for God, that we observe conscientiously His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

The believer who obeys the Lord’s commands is demonstrating His love for the Lord and will experience a more intimate fellowship with the Lord and a more intimate knowledge of Him since the Lord only discloses Himself to those believers who are obedient to His commands.

Intimacy is a close, familiar and usually affectionate or loving, personal relationship with another person or group. In relation to people, intimacy is a close association with or detailed knowledge or deep understanding of a person.

Jeremiah 9:24, “but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD.”

If we are obedient to the Lord’s commands, then we will be rewarded with a more intimate, detail knowledge and understanding of the Lord.

Our Lord in John 14 illustrates this principle.

John 14:21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

“He who loves Me will be loved by My Father”: The believer who is obedient to the Lord’s commands will be loved by the Father meaning that the Father will honor and show respect towards the obedient believer by rewarding him with a more intimate fellowship with Himself.

“Will disclose” is the verb emphano (ἐμφανίζω) and expresses the concept that the obedient believer will become intimate with the Lord and will receive greater revelation and insight into the Lord and His ways.
‘I will love him and will disclose Myself to him’: The Lord Jesus Christ will love the obedient believer meaning He will honor and respect the believer by rewarding the believer with a more intimate fellowship with Himself.

Our Lord in His Vine and the Branches Metaphor that is recorded in John 15 illustrates the principle that the believer’s obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He loved, leads to intimacy with Himself.

John 15:1-14, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

The term “friends” is employed by our Lord to express the intimacy between Himself and the believer who is obedient to His command to love his fellow believer as the Lord has loved him at the Cross.

Friends don’t hold things back from one another and they share secrets and joy with one another and are intimate with one another. Friendship with the Lord is no different since He shares His secrets and joy and is intimate with the believer who obeys Him.

Abraham and Moses were called “friends of God” because they were on intimate terms with the Lord and they were on intimate terms with the Lord because they were obedient to Him (Ex. 33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23)

John 15:15-17, “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and
that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another.”

The Lord loves those believers who make a diligent effort to know Him and they will be rewarded with a more intimate fellowship with Himself.

Proverbs 8:17, “I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.”

Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

There is no accident…we are as close to the Lord as we want to be. Those who put the most effort into their relationship with the Lord will experience greater intimacy with the Lord than those who do not put as much effort into their relationship with Him.

Finally, those who are diligent in pursuing their relationship with the Lord and are diligent in their obedience to Him will also be rewarded in the future with even greater intimacy with the Lord during His millennial reign and eternal state.

Revelation 2:17, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”

Revelation 2:26, “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS.”

Revelation 3:21, “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Revelation 22:12, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Also, those believers who are obedient to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved all men will experience the joy of the Lord. The propaganda of Satan’s cosmic system has promoted the lie that wealth, good environment, marriage, having children, approbation from men will produce true happiness and joy. Satan’s propaganda machine promotes the lie that good circumstances and people and “looking out for number one,” are the basis for true happiness and joy, but the Word of God states that true happiness and joy is based upon doing the Father’s will by loving and serving one another.

In His Vine and the Branches Metaphor that is recorded in John 15, the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples that obeying His command to love one another as He had loved them is the pathway to experiencing fellowship with Him, being productive for God and sharing His joy.
John 15:1-11, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

Joy is the passion or emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good; that excitement of pleasurable feelings which is caused by success, good fortune, the gratification of desire or some good possessed, or by a rational prospect of possessing what we love or desire; gladness; exultation; exhilaration of spirits.

Joy is a delight of the mind, from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good.

“My joy” refers to the joy that the Lord Jesus Christ possessed in His soul as a result of being consciously aware of His union and fellowship with the Father and was also the result of His obedience to the Father’s will to love and serve all men.

Hebrews 12:2, “Begin concentrating upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The believer who abides in Christ’s love will experience the joy of the Lord and this is accomplished by obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved all men, which the Lord describes as “abiding in My love.”

Just as the Lord experienced joy from doing the Father’s will by fulfilling the command to love one another so the believer will experience that same joy by doing the same.

“May be made full” is the third person singular aorist passive subjunctive form of the verb pleroo (πληρέω), which should be translated “might become a reality.”

This is an ingressive aorist denoting “entrance into the state” of experiencing the joy of the Lord.
The passive voice is used without an expressed agency but it is implied that if the disciples put into practice our Lord’s teaching to abide in His love, our Lord’s joy will become a reality in their lives.

The subjunctive mood of the verb *pleroo* is employed with the conjunction *hina* to express the purpose for the Lord teaching His disciples the importance of abiding in Him and obeying His commandment to love one another as He loved them, which is, sharing the joy of the Lord. John 15:1-12 teaches that sharing the joy of the Lord is contingent upon the believer obeying the Lord’s command to love his fellow believer just as our Lord was obedient to the Father’s commands and loved the believer.

Love for others is motivated by our love for the Lord and our love for the Lord is demonstrated by our obedience to His commands to love one another and our obedience to His commands is the response in our souls to the love, which He demonstrated on behalf of us at the Cross.

The greater the obedience by the believer to the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love and serve his fellow believer, the greater the joy of the Lord in the life of the believer. The production of the joy of the Lord in the believer by the Holy Spirit is in direct proportion to the degree that the believer is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love and serve his fellow believer.

The Holy Spirit produces the joy of the Lord in the believer who obeys the command to love one another and this is called in Scripture, “the fruit of the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

The believer is commanded in the Word of God to rejoice because God wants to bless the believer and for them to share and experience His joy.

1 Thessalonians 5:16, “Rejoice always.”

The believer is commanded to serve the Lord with joy.

Psalm 100:2, “Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.”

If we are not experiencing the joy of the Lord it is because we are disobedient. If we don’t serve the Lord with joy then we will be under divine discipline.

Deuteronomy 28:45-47, “So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things.”
The believer is to rejoice because the Lord Jesus Christ has delivered him from the following: (1) Personal sins (1 Jn. 2:2). (2) Old sin nature (Rm. 6:6). (3) Satan and his cosmic system (Gal. 6:14). (4) Self (Gal. 2:20).

Believers are to rejoice because of their eternal relationship and union with the sovereign ruler of the cosmos, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). They are to rejoice because they have been called into fellowship with the Lord (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:1-4).

Believers are to rejoice because of what the Lord did for them at the cross resulting in the forgiveness of their sins (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7). Believers are to rejoice because the Lord Jesus will give them a resurrection body (Phlp. 3:20-21).

They are to rejoice because the Lord Jesus will reward them for their faithfulness to Him in time (Col. 3:23-24). Believers are to rejoice because of the honor of undergoing undeserved suffering and persecution because of their identification with Christ and because of the rewards they will receive as a result of doing so (Acts 5:41; 2 Cor. 7:4; Phlp. 1:12-18; 1:27-30; Col. 1:24; 1 Th. 3:6-9; 1 Pt. 1:6-9; 4:13).

The Christian’s love for God and his fellow believer and fellow man also involves “reciprocation.”

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines the noun reciprocation, “a mutual exchange, a return in kind or of like value; alternating motion.”

They define the verb reciprocate, “to give and take mutually; to return in kind or degree, compliment gracefully; to make a return for something.”

If we paraphrase these definitions and give them a spiritual application, we could say the following: With reference to the believer’s relationship with God there is to be a mutual exchange, a give and take between the believer and God in the sense of the believer obeying, honoring, respecting, revering and being dedicated and devoted to God, even to the point of self-sacrifice. This exchange between the believer and God is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to God’s revelation of Himself since the believer has been created and redeemed for God’s purpose and good pleasure.

With reference to the believer’s relationship with other believers there is to be a mutual exchange, a give and take between believers in the sense of the believer honoring and respecting his fellow believer, being dedicated and devoted to his fellow believer, even to the point of self-sacrifice. This exchange between the believer and his fellow believer is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to his fellow believer since both he and his fellow believer were created by God, according to His image of God, redeemed at the Cross and fellow members of the body of Christ.
Reciprocation is an essential aspect of divine-love since it encompasses both the vertical aspect (directed towards God) and horizontal aspect (directed towards other believers and unbelievers) of divine-love.

Vertical: Mark 12:30, “AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”

Horizontal: Mark 12:31, “The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Therefore, there is to be reciprocation between the believer and God and the believer towards his fellow believer.

To focus our attention to the concept of reciprocation, the Holy Spirit used a special Greek word, a reciprocal pronoun, allelon (ἀλλήλων) meaning “one another.”

Allelon means “the quality or state by which there is a mutual exchange between others and ourselves.” The term “reciprocal” means “mutual, shared, shown or felt alike by both sides; united in feelings, actions, responsibilities, and attitudes.”

Reciprocal implies a return in due measure by each side in the matter discussed. This reciprocal pronoun denotes the concept of reciprocation and is frequently used in statements and injunctions to Christians regarding the responsibilities that believers are to engage in for the mutual help and blessing of one another.

In John 13, our Lord taught His disciples the principle of reciprocation in His washing of His disciples’ feet and in His command to love one another as He had loved them.

In 1 John 4:7-21, the apostle John teaches the principle of reciprocation in his command to love one another as the Lord had loved.

In divine love, there is to be reciprocation between believers in the sense that there is to be a mutual exchange of care and concern among believers for one another. Believers are to compliment one another gracefully and return love for one another.

Divine love involves a reciprocal relationship among believers in the sense of there being a mutual sharing of feelings, actions, responsibilities and attitudes between believers. It involves reciprocation among believers in the sense that believers are to share together as partners in the needs, burdens, concerns, joys, and blessings for the purpose of encouragement, comfort, challenge or exhortation, praise, prayer and physical help according to the needs and ability (cf. Phil. 1:5 with 1:19; and 2:4 with 1:27; also 4:3; Rom. 12:15; and 1 Thess. 5:11,14,15; Heb. 10:33).
Divine love involves reciprocation among believers because believers share the same eternal life through regeneration and thus the same eternal “relationship” and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). It involves reciprocation among believers because they entered into an “active partnership” with each other and through their prayers, friendship and financial support they are to support the communication of the gospel of Christ’s enterprise on earth.

Philippians 1:3-7, “I continue giving thanks to my God (the Father) based upon my entire remembrance of all of you, always by means of my every specific detailed request on behalf of each and every one of you. I make it my habit to offer this specific detailed request with joy because of your fellowship with respect to the proclamation of the gospel from the first day up to this present moment. I am confident of this very same thing, namely that, the One (God the Holy Spirit) who began in all of you a good work that is divine in character, will bring it to completion up to the day of Christ who is Jesus. Correspondingly, it is appropriate, as far as I am concerned, to continue to possess this attitude concerning each and every one of you because all of you continue to have me in your heart both in my imprisonment and in the confirmed defense for the gospel. Each and every one of you, all of you without exception as a result continue to be my joint-partners concerning this grace!”

Divine love involves reciprocation among believers because they are fellow members of the body of Christ and are responsible to encourage each other and to share each others burdens, needs, concerns, and joy.

Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

Divine love involves reciprocation among believers in the sense that believers are to be good stewards of their time (they are to be dedicated and devoted to promoting the gospel of Christ and aiding the body of Christ). They are to be good stewards with their talent (they are to operate in their spiritual gifts) and treasure (they are to financially support each other when necessary) and truth (they are to apply the Word of God in their relationships with each other).

Time: Galatians 6:9-10, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

Talent: 1 Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Treasure: Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure -- pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”
Truth: Colossians 4:5-6, “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Reciprocation is an essential aspect of divine-love since it encompasses both the vertical aspect (directed towards God) and horizontal aspect (directed towards other believers and unbelievers) of divine-love.

Connected with the concept of reciprocation are the “one another” commands in Scripture. Repeatedly the New Testament commands us to love and care for one another as fellow members of the body of Christ. In fact, the Lord Jesus desires all believers to be functioning effectively as joint-partners/fellow-members of His body, the church. This “one another” care is to be the result of our fellowship with other believers.

This reciprocal pronoun allelon is frequently used in statements and injunctions to Christians regarding the responsibilities that believers are to engage in for the mutual help and blessing of one another. The frequency of these injunctions indicates the importance of this truth to the growth, health, and ministry of the body of Christ.

The basic and primary command for believers is to love one another. All together these “one another” passages may be grouped together into 18 or more specific categories of responsibility where Christians are to be ministering in the lives of fellow members of the body of Christ.

Just a brief look at these passages will quickly reveal two things: (1) The need we each have of the ministry and aid of others, and (2) Our responsibility to serve to others.

The “one another” passages and injunctions remind us: (1) That no man is an island—no individual believer can function effectively by himself. (2) We need the help and love of other members of the body. (3) We need encouragement, counsel, prayer, or physical help, depending on our particular needs at any given moment. (4) That every believer is important and essential to the proper function of the church—the body of Christ.

While this will vary in one’s life, still, each believer needs help in some way, but also each has something to contribute to the well-being, growth, and ministry of the body of Christ.

A study of these “one another” passages yield a number of principles that lay the foundation and set forth the reasons why God has given us these exhortations in the New Testament.

The following is a list of why we should love one another: (1) We are God’s children (Eph. 5:1). (2) We are brethren (Rm. 15:14). (3) We are members of one another (1 Cor. 12:25). (4) We are taught by God to love one another (1 Thess.
4:9). (5) God loves us (1 John 4:7). (6) It is the expression and fulfillment of God’s will (Mt. 22:35-40). (7) We want to glorify Him (1 Pet. 4:10-11). (8) We have a responsibility to love one another (Rm. 13:8-10).

The objectives in loving one another: For a testimony to the world of the reality of God’s love in Christ:

**John 13:35:** “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

For loves continues to increase: “and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you” (1 Thess. 3:12); and intensity and Spiritual Source: “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Pet. 1:22). “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8).

For ministry and service to others: Ultimately, ministry and service summarize all the One Another injunctions that follow as expressions of God’s love for others.

Obedience to the following prohibitions will enable us to fulfill the mandate to love one another as the Lord loved us:

- Do not judge one another: Romans 14:13, “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.”
- Do not have lawsuits with one another: 1 Corinthians 6:7, “Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?”
- Do not bite and devour one another: Galatians 5:15, “But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.”
- Do not challenge and envy one another: Galatians 5:26, “Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”
- Do not speak evil or complain against one another: James 4:11, “Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.” James 5:9, “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.”
- Do not seek glory from one another: John 5:44, “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?”

Obedience to the following commands will enable us to fulfill the mandate to love one another as the Lord loved us: Be devoted to one another: Romans 12:10, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”
Be of the same mind toward one another: Romans 12:16, “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

Build one another up: Romans 14:19, “So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”

Accept one another: Romans 15:7, “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”

Wait for one another: 1 Corinthians 11:33, “So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.”

Tolerate one another: Ephesians 4:2, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”

Kind, tender-hearted and forgiving to one another: Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Speak to one another with spiritual songs: Ephesians 5:19, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”

Be subject to one another: Ephesians 5:21, “and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Regard one another as more important than yourself: Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

Bear with one another: Colossians 3:13, “bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Comfort one another: 1 Thessalonians 4:18, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Encourage one another: 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

Stimulate one another to the performance of divine good: Hebrews 10:24, “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

Pray for one another: James 5:16, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

Hospitable to one another: 1 Peter 4:9, “Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”

Serve one another: 1 Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
Humble toward one another: 1 Peter 5:5, “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

Loving and caring for one another is not an option for the Christian but rather it is a mandate, or in other words, a command. The Lord Jesus Christ issued a command to His disciples to love their enemies, which shocked those who heard Him but this was the manner in which the Father and He loved the entire human race.

Matthew 5:43-48, “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The Lord Jesus Christ explains in Matthew 5:44-48 that there is no virtue in loving those who love you but rather His disciples were to imitate God who loves His enemies, those who are obnoxious sinners to Him.

God loved all of us while we were yet sinners and antagonistic to Him.

Romans 5:8, “But, God (the Father), as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, proves His own divine-love for the benefit of all of us by the fact that while we were, as an eternal spiritual truth, still sinners, Christ died as a substitute for the benefit of all of us.”

God treated us in grace and mercy because of His great love meaning that because of His great love He withheld judgment and bestowed on all of us unmerited blessings because of our faith in Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-5, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

It is impossible for anyone to obey the command to love one’s enemies unless one is a believer meaning he has responded to God’s love for him in the Person and Work of Christ by obeying the command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to receive eternal salvation.

John 3:16, “For God loved the world so much, that He gave His only uniquely born Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
Only those who have responded to God’s love for them in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ have the capacity to love their enemies, their neighbor as themselves and to love one another as Christ loved. The believer who comprehends and acknowledges and is conscious and accepts by faith that he is the object of God’s love and was treated in grace and unconditional love while yet an enemy of God will receive the capacity to obey the command to love his enemies.

In both the Old and New Testaments believers are commanded to love both God and their fellow human being as themselves.

Matthew 22:34-36, “But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him. Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

Comparative passage: Mark 12:28-29, “One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the foremost of all?’ Jesus answered, "The foremost is, ‘HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.’”

The scribes had determined that the Jews were obligated to obey 613 precepts in the Mosaic Law, 365 negative precepts and 248 positive. Regarding these 613 precepts, there was constant debate over which was the most important. Some claimed it was the positive commands and others said the negative prohibitions were more important. As a result, the Pharisees were always describing the law in terms of light and heavy, and small and great. The idea was that if your good deeds outweighed the bad, God would accept you, but if not, well, there was no way to get rid of the bad, no way to truly experience God’s forgiveness. As a result, they taught that people needed to keep the weightier commandments because with obedience to these they would get more points with God.

Matthew 22:37-39, “And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’"

Comparative passage: Mark 12:30, “AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”

Matthew 22:38-39, “This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

Comparative passage: Mark 12:31, “The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Matthew 22:40, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
The Lord Jesus made love the most important issue because according to Romans 13:8-10 because love is the fulfillment of the Law.

Romans 13:10, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

The believer who comprehends and acknowledges and accepts by faith that he is the object of God’s love and was treated in grace and unconditional love while yet an enemy of God will receive the capacity to obey the command to love God and his neighbor as himself.

In John 13:34, the Lord Jesus Christ took the command of Leviticus 19:18, which is quoted in Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31, and elevated it. He gave it a new meaning in the sense that He commanded His disciples to love one another “as He loved them” since He fulfilled the command perfectly during His First Advent as the Lamb without spot or blemish.

John 13:33-34, “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.’”

Corrected translation: John 13:34, “A new commandment in character and quality and example I give to all of you, that all of you love one another, even as I have loved all of you, that all of you also love one another.”

When our Lord says I give you a new commandment, He does not mean “new in time” since Old Testament saints were told to love their neighbor in Leviticus 19:18. Rather, the Lord is saying that the commandment to love one another is new in “quality, character” and “example” since love would take on a new meaning when our Lord would self-sacrificially offer Himself up to the Father as our Substitute for the propitiation for our sins.

The Old Testament demanded that the believer love not only God but also his neighbor as himself, thus, the commandment was old. Christ not only commanded His disciples to love but to do so as He had loved them. The latter part is new.

Under the old commandment in Leviticus 19:18, which is quoted in Mark 12:28-31 and Matthew 22:34-40 the test of love for one’s neighbor was love for oneself but the test under the new commandment was to love as Christ had loved them. It is impossible for a believer to fulfill the mandate to love one another as Christ loved him until he comprehends and acknowledges and is conscious that he is the object of Christ’s love.

1 John 3:1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”
The fact that the believer is an object of God’s love provides him with the capacity to love others and execute the command to love his fellow believer as Christ loved.

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

God’s love for the believer serves as the power and motivation to obey the command to love one another as Christ loved all men. The believer must acknowledge his own sinfulness and unworthiness before God before he attempts to love others in the manner that the Lord has commanded.

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

The believer must experience God’s love for him before he can obey the command to love as Christ has loved all men. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to experience the love of God in his own life and the Spirit accomplishes this through prayer and the Word of God. The Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture enlightens the believer as to the love that God the Father has exercised towards him as manifested in the Person and Work of Christ at the Cross.

Romans 5:5, “In fact, this confidence, as an eternal spiritual truth, never disappoints because God’s love is always being poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit.”

The Holy Spirit reproduces the love of God in the believer who is obedient to the command to love one another.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Obedience to the command to love one another as Christ loved is the positive response in faith by the believer to the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God to the Father and the Son’s love that has been directed toward them through the death of Christ.

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

The love that loves like Christ is the sign of true discipleship.

As conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ must be the chief mark of the believer’s Christian walk, so love must be the chief mark of that conformity.

Ephesians 5:1-2, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

Divine love must be accompanied by discernment. Discernment refers “to the capacity to perceive clearly and hence to understand the real nature of something.”
It is concerned with practical matters like speaking (10:14; 11:9; 12:23; 22:12) and general prudence and discernment concerning how to live rightly in relationships.

Discernment can be referred to as “tact” and the ability to understand relationships and situations with a view to practical action. Tact is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.

Discernment refers to the faculty to discern, discriminate, and have acuteness of judgment and understanding in any given situation. We must learn discernment from the Holy Spirit who teaches us discernment by making the Word of God understandable and guiding us in its application.

Spiritual discernment refers to the ability to separate, distinguish between what is God’s will and what is evil in any given situation.

Hebrews 5:12-14, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

Spiritual discernment refers to the power or ability to grasp and comprehend what is obscure to the soulish man. It stresses accuracy in reading character or motives and the Holy Spirit provides the believer with this ability as the believer obeys the Spirit and follows His guidance and direction that appears in the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12, “The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Lord Jesus Christ provides us a perfect example of an individual with perfect discernment. The impeccable human nature of Christ in hypostatic union was perfectly accurate in reading the character and motives of people in His life not because He was always utilizing His divine omniscience but rather it was because He was always obedient to the guidance and direction of the Spirit.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord Jesus Christ’s demonstrates perfect discernment in handling a difficult and delicate situation with the Pharisees.

Matthew 22:15-22, “Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said. And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, ‘Why are you
testing Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the coin used for the poll-tax.’ And they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar's.’ Then He said to them, ‘Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.’ And hearing this, they were amazed, and leaving Him, they went away.”

In Matthew 22:15-22, the Lord Jesus Christ in His impeccable human nature demonstrated perfect discernment in that He tactfully handled this difficult confrontation with the Pharisees. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated the keen sense of what to say to the Pharisees and what not to say to them so that He would not give offense to the Roman civil authorities that were occupying Judea at this particular time.

The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated the ability to understand the real nature of the Pharisees’ question, which was designed to trap Him. The Lord Jesus Christ accurately read the character and motive of the Pharisees’ question and the Holy Spirit provided Him with this ability since He always obeyed the Spirit and followed His guidance and direction, which was in accordance with the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ exercised the faculty to discern, discriminate, and had acuteness of judgment and understanding of the character and motives of the Pharisees. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated the ability to grasp and comprehend and the power to understand what was obscure to the soulish mind of His audience that were witnesses to this confrontation with the Pharisees.

The Lord Jesus Christ loved the Pharisees with the love of God but He was not gullible and He taught His disciples not to be gullible and therefore, we too as Christians are not to be gullible as we go into the world proclaiming the Gospel.

**Matthew 10:16, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”**

Christians must exercise discernment for not everyone is a sheep and some people are dogs or hogs and some are wolves in sheep’s clothing. We Christians are the Lord’s sheep but this does not mean we should let people pull the wool over our eyes.

As God’s people, we Christians are privileged to handle the “holy” things of the Lord. He has entrusted to us precious truths of the Word of God and we must regard them carefully. Only a fool would give pearls to a pig.

**Matthew 7:6, “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”**

While it is true that we are to present the Gospel to every creature, it is also true that we must not cheapen the Gospel by a ministry that lacks discernment. Even
Jesus refused to talk to Herod (Lk. 23:9) and Paul refused to argue with people who resisted the Word (Acts 13:44-49). We as Christians must be able to judge the character and motives of people in our lives as our Lord did, but not to condemn them but to minister to them. The reason for judgment, then, is not that we condemn others, but that we might be able to minister to them.

1 Peter 4:7, “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.”

One of the most foolish statements I have ever read is, “Love is blind.” Love is not blind but rather is discerning and does not close its eyes to the truth, to reality, to sin (Heb. 12:6).

Hebrews 12:6, “FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

What a horrible thing it would be if love truly were blind and had no discernment. Christian love must operate according to truth. Love is discerning. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated His discerning love for the Pharisees by rebuking severely (Mt. 23:13-16).

Matthew 23:13-15, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

His rebuke was designed to bring them to repentance and to believe in Him for eternal salvation. He did not want them to go to the Lake of Fire, just as the Lord does not want any one to go there.

Paul showed his discerning love for Peter by rebuking him for his hypocrisy in Galatians 2:11-16). Discerning love has its eyes wide open to how things are, as well as to how things ought to be.

In Philippians 1:9, Paul prayed that the Philippians divine love might be accompanied by discernment.

Philippians 1:9, “Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge.”

“Experiential knowledge” is the noun epignosis (ἐπίγνωσις) which refers to personally encountering the agape, “divine love” of the Lord Jesus as it is revealed.
by the Spirit in the pages of Scripture through the process of fellowship and being affected by that revelation in the sense that it conforms us to the image of Christ.

We know this is an experiential knowledge of God’s love in and through Christ since the believer’s agape, “divine love” for God and people originates from God’s self-sacrificial love for us as expressed by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross.

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

“Discerning” is the noun aísthesis (αἰσθήσεως), which refers to the capacity to understand the real nature of any given situation and to apply accurately agape, “divine-love” to that situation.

The noun aísthesis (αἰσθήσεως), “discerning” refers to the ability to separate, distinguish and choose between what is God’s will and what is evil. It refers to the faculty to discern, discriminate, and have acuteness of judgment and understanding of the character and motives of people.

The word refers to the ability to grasp and comprehend and have the power to understand what is obscure to the soulish man. Intercessory prayer for both believers and unbelievers is an expression of the love of God in our lives. If we love our fellow believer, we will pray for the spiritual growth and temporal needs of members of the royal family of God (Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 1:11; James 5:16; 3 John 2; 2 Cor. 13:9; Rom. 15:30-31).

Ephesians 1:18, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know (oida, “know without a doubt”) what is the hope (elpis, “confident assurance”) of His calling (election), what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

In Ephesians 1:18, Paul expresses his love for the Ephesian believers by praying that the Holy Spirit would enlighten them so that they will know without a doubt what is the confident assurance of their election to privilege and their eternal inheritance that they possess because of their eternal union with Christ.

Ephesians 1:19, “and what is the surpassing greatness of His power (dunamis, “inherent power”) toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working (energeia, “operative power”) of the strength (ischus, “possession of power to overcome”) of His might (kratos, “manifested power”).”

In Ephesians 1:19, Paul expresses his love for the Ephesian believers by praying that the Holy Spirit would enlighten them regarding the omnipotence of God and the exercise of that omnipotence through the resurrection, ascension and session of Christ that has been made available to them through their union with Christ, which gives them the capacity to overcome the devil, and the sin nature.

“Power” is the noun dunamis, which refers the inherent power of God and thus it refers to God’s attribute called omnipotence.
“Working” is the noun *energeia*, which means, “operative power” and is a reference to the exercise of God’s omnipotence through the resurrection, ascension and session of Christ.

“Strength” is the noun *ischus*, which means, “possession of power to overcome” and refers to the 100% availability of divine omnipotence that has been made available to every church age believer because of their union with the Lord Jesus Christ that provides them “the power to overcome” Satan and the kingdom of darkness and the old Adamic sin nature.

“Might” is the noun *kratos*, which means, “manifested power” and refers to the omnipotence of God that has been “manifested” in history through the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:20, “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

“In Christ” indicates that the Ephesian believer’s confidence, election, eternal inheritance and power to experience victory over the devil and the flesh are all found in their eternal union and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:21, “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.”

In Ephesians 3, Paul again expresses his great love for the Ephesian believers by praying for them.

Ephesians 3:14-19, “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

By the Holy Spirit strengthening the Ephesian believers in the new Christ nature through the Word of God, they would able to comprehend spiritually the love of Christ, which surpasses human knowledge and as a result they would grow up spiritually and be conformed to the image of Christ who is God.

Philippians 1:9, “Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge.”

In Philippians 1:9, Paul demonstrated his love for the Philippians by praying that their love would grow by means of an experiential knowledge in the sense of personally encountering through the process of fellowship, the love of God in Christ as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in prayerful meditation upon Word of
God. It also involves being affected by this encounter resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Philippians 1:10, “So that all of you might continue to choose the essentials in order that all of you might be sincere and without offense for the day of Christ.”

The result of the Philippians’ divine-love continuing to grow is that they might continue to have the capacity to choose the essentials or what is of the utmost importance in life, thus having right priorities in life.

“The essentials” refers to experiencing identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, which is the means to executing the Father’s will.

Philippians 3:10-11, “that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death. If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones.”

Colossians 1:9, “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

“Knowledge” refers to an “experiential knowledge” of the Father’s will in the sense of personally encountering through the process of fellowship, the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer. It also involves being affected by this encounter with the Father’s will resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Colossians 1:10-12, “so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.”

Believers are to offer up intercessory prayers for all men since God desires all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the Truth (fellowship), which is resident in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tm. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16-17).

If we love the unbeliever, we will pray that God would bring in people and circumstances that would cause the unbeliever to have the humility to give the Gospel a hearing and that they would be “exposed” to the Gospel so that they can make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

Nowhere do the Scriptures sanction or command believers to pray that God would save the unbeliever since God, because He is just and righteous, cannot coerce or make the unbeliever do anything against his will, thus God cannot save
the unbeliever unless the unbeliever makes a decision to accept Christ as Savior. Although God’s will is that all men be saved, God cannot force any human being to believe in His Son Jesus Christ against their will, thus people go to the Lake of Fire forever and ever not because God desires it but because they choose to.

If we operate in the love of God, we will pray for our enemies.

Matthew 5:43-44, “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

The believer receives the capacity to pray for his enemies, when he accepts by faith Christ’s love for him and responds in obedience to Christ’s love for him, and which love, the Spirit reveals in the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ expressed His divine love for those who mocked, scourged, vilified and crucified Him by interceding for them before the Father (Lk. 23:33-34) and Stephen expressed the love of God at his death.

Luke 23:33-34, “When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

Acts 7:59-60, “They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep.”

Loving God and our fellow believer and human being will result in rewards. The believer must obey the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love one another as He has loved in order for his Christian service to be productive and rewarded by the Lord at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church.

John 13:34, “A new commandment in character and quality and example I give to all of you, that all of you divinely love one another, even as I have divinely loved all of you, that all of you also divinely love one another.”

Obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved us is the response in our soul to the manner in which the Lord loved us at the Cross.

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

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

Therefore, productive Christian service is motivated by our love for the Lord and our love for the Lord is the response of our entire being to the manner in which He loved us and is expressed by our obedience to His command to love one another as He has loved us at the Cross.

Deuteronomy 10:12, “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love
Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Productive Christian service demands proper motivation. Motivation is that which prompts a person to act in a certain way, the goal of one’s actions. Motivation for Christian service begins with the believer prayerfully meditating upon the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God of the Lord Jesus Christ’s self-sacrificial love and service for him at the Cross. Then the believer must accept by faith the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s self-sacrificial love and service for him, and which faith expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved him. This acceptance by faith of the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s love, which expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved, constitutes serving by means of the Spirit.

Philippians 3:2-3, “Beware of those dogs, beware of those evil workers, beware of the mutilation because we are the circumcision, those who are serving (God the Father) by means of the Spirit of God, who are priding themselves in the nature and doctrine of Christ Jesus, who have no confidence in the flesh.”

Service for the Lord and other believers is inextricably tied together since we love the Lord who we can’t see in our fellow believer who we can see.

1 John 4:20-21, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

So it is through love that we are to serve one another.

Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Every believer has been given a spiritual gift for the purpose of serving other members of the body of Christ. The proper function of one’s spiritual gift demands obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He loved.

1 Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

1 Corinthians 12:7, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The believer’s faith in the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s love and service for him, which expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved, enables the believer to imitate the example of love and service by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ provided His disciples with a visual illustration and example regarding the responsibility to serve each other through love (Jn. 13:1-17).
The believer’s faith in the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s love and service for him, which expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved, produces humility in the believer. Humility expresses itself in putting others ahead of yourself.

Paul commanded the Philippians to put each other ahead of themselves as Christ did. In the same way that our Lord Jesus Christ was rewarded for His service so too will our Christian service be rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church if it has been properly motivated by our love for the Lord, which expresses itself in obedience to His command to love one another as He has loved (1 Cor. 3:11-14; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Divine discipline is an expression of God’s love for His children. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a child of God at the moment he exercised faith alone in Christ alone.

John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

God the Father expressed His great love for us by making us His children at the moment of salvation.

1 John 3:1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

There are two categories of divine discipline that are an expression of God’s love: (1) Negative: God expresses His love for His children by disciplining them in the sense that He “punishes” them when they are disobedient to His will. (2) Positive: God expresses His love for His children by disciplining them in the sense of “training” them when they are obedient to His will and in fellowship.

Both categories of divine discipline are designed to keep the believer on track in executing the Father’s will by becoming like Christ. The Word of God is employed in both positive and negative categories of discipline.

Hebrews 4:12, “The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly.
and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

Jeremiah 32:33, “They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction.”

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the pastor-teacher who is the delegated authority in the local assembly, to reprove and rebuke the children of God from the pulpit with the Word of God as an expression of His love.

2 Timothy 4:1-4, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is to conformity to the Father’s will.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

There are three categories of divine discipline (punishment) for the disobedient child of God: (1) Warning (Rev. 3:20; James 5:9) (2) Intense (Ps. 38:1; 2 Th. 2:11). (3) Dying (Jer. 9:16; 44:12; Phlp. 3:18-19; Re. 3:16; Ps. 118:17-18; 1 Jo. 5:16).

God disciplines His “obedient” children through adversity and underserved suffering in order to build the believer’s confidence in his relationship with God and to get him to depend on God for his security and protection rather than money and human relationships.

God disciplines His “obedient” children through adversity and underserved suffering in order to demonstrate to the believer the sufficiency of God’s Word in handling any problem or difficulty in life.

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer (Revelation 3:14-19).

Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

“Love” is the verb φιλέω (φιλέω), which means, “to personally and affectionately love someone” and expresses the Lord Jesus Christ’s personal
affection, care and concern for the believer by disciplining him whether for training when obedient or punishment when disobedient.

“Reprove” is the verb *elencho* (ἐλέγχω), “to reprove, chasten” and “convict” of sin in order to “instruct” the believer and restore him to fellowship.

“Discipline” is the verb *paideuo* (παιδεύω) and was commonly used in Greek literature to mean the “upbringing” and “teaching” and “disciplining” of children.

Such “upbringing” consisted of teaching general knowledge and various kinds of training aimed at developing discipline and character. The Lord reproves us because He is trying to develop His character in us.

Revelation 3:20-22 teaches that the Lord disciplines us not only because He loves us and but also because He wants to reward us. Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not train us when we are obedient and punishes us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God.

Hebrews 12:1-13, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons, ‘MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM. FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.’ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble and make straight paths
for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase “share His holiness.”

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and underserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father.

Ecclesiastes 7:14, “In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider -- God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him.”

In order to receive discipline without getting bitter and complaining, the believer must recognized and submit to the authority of the Word of God, the delegated authority of the pastor-teacher and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history and therefore our circumstances.

Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Job 5:17-18, “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Proverbs 15:32-33, “He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.”

Love for the Lord expresses itself by worshipping Him. The believer received the forgiveness of all his sins—past, present and future, the moment he exercised faith alone in Christ alone, which should in turn cause the believer to respond in love for who the Lord is and what He accomplished for him at the Cross, and which love expresses itself by worshipping Him. Worship is adoring contemplation of the Lord and is the act of paying honor and reverence to Him and affection for Him and flows from love and where there is little love, there is little worship.

Worship is the loving ascription of praise to the Lord in gratitude and appreciation for who and what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and in His work on the Cross for us. It is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before the Lord.

Luke 7:36-37, “Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was
reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume.”

This particular woman was a prostitute in the city, which is indicated by the following:

The first factor that indicates that this woman is a prostitute is the qualitative relative pronoun *hostis* (δυστίς), “who,” which emphasizes the character or reputation of this particular woman. The second factor that indicates that this woman is a prostitute is the adjective *hamartolos* (ἐμορτωλός), “sinner” which indicates that this woman lived a flagrantly immoral life and possessed a dishonorable vocation. Together these two words clearly indicate that this particular woman was considered a woman of bad reputation in the city because she had a dishonorable job. Lastly, her appearance signified that she was a prostitute in that her hair was unbound and we know her hair was unbound because she wiped her tears from the Lord’s feet with hair.

The Pharisee and this prostitute come from totally opposite segments of society. The Pharisee was well-respected and rich whereas this woman was of a bad reputation and considered the scum of the earth.

Luke 7:37, “And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume.”

This gesture of devotion by this woman came at considerable cost because the ointment was very expensive. The alabaster box was also costly because it was made of a fine, translucent stone.

Now, you might be wondering as to why she was a prostitute allowed to enter the banquet of a Pharisee. It was customary in the ancient world for outsiders to stand or sit against the wall during banquets so that they could watch the so-called “important people” and hear their conversations.

These people were not invited but allowed to join the feast and it was not uncommon for these outsiders to engage in conversation with those who were eating. Those who were invited sat on couches around a table.

In the East the door of the dining room was left open so the uninvited could pass in and out during the festivities. They were allowed to take seats by the wall, listening to the conversation between the host and guests.

Jewish rabbis did not speak to women in public, nor did they eat with them in public but the Gospels record that the Lord Jesus who was a rabbi was well-known as being a friend to tax-collectors and prostitutes (Mk. 2:15-17) and that they believed in Him (Mt. 21:32).

Luke 7:38-43, “and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. Now when the
Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he replied, ‘Say it, Teacher.’ ‘A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii ($200 equaled to 2 years wages), and the other fifty ($22 equaled to 2 months wages). When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?’ Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You have judged correctly.”

Simon could not mistake the logic of the Lord because a man forgiven a $220 debt would certainly have greater gratitude than one forgiven a debt 10 times less. If the cancelled debt was greater, this meant the gift of the creditor was greater. The point the Lord Jesus wanted to make with Simon was that Simon owed God the lesser debt and the woman owed the greater.

This parable does not deal with the amount of sin in a person’s life but rather the “awareness” of sin in his life. Simon and this woman were both sinners in the eyes of God but Simon does not acknowledge that he is because he thinks he is better than her because her sins are so shocking. He has a distorted view of himself because he does not agree with God that he is a sinner (Rm. 3:10, 23).

Romans 3:10, “As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none righteous, not even one.’”

Romans 3:23, “For each and every person has sinned consequently, they are always failing to measure up to the glory originating from God.”

This prostitute’s sins were well known but Simon’s were hidden to everyone except God but both of them were bankrupt before God and could not repay their sin dept and were therefore both in need of a Savior. Simon was just as much a sinner and spiritually bankrupt as this prostitute yet he fails to acknowledge it. He has rejected Christ as His Savior but she has accepted and this is demonstrated by the fact that she publicly worships the Lord.

Luke 7:44-47, “Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

Luke 7:47 is incorrectly translated and should say:

Luke 7:47, “For this reason, I say to you (Simon) her sins, which are many, have been forgiven with the result that they remain forgiven forever as
demonstrated by the intensity of her love that is characterized by reverence, honor and respect.”

This passage is incorrectly translated in the NASU since it makes it sound as if the woman was forgiven “because” she loved the Lord, but that would be works. This woman wasn’t forgiven because she loved much, but rather she loved much because she recognized and accepted by faith that she had been forgiven much by God. This woman wasn’t forgiven because of her actions but rather she is simply responding to having already been forgiven. In fact, Luke 7:50 states that this woman received the forgiveness of sins because she exercised faith in Christ (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9; Col. 1:14; 2:13).

Luke 7:50, “And He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

This prostitute’s tears were tears of joy and happiness because her sins were forgiven and her sins were forgiven because she trusted in the Lord Jesus as her Savior.

Ephesians 1:7, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

This is clearly not the first time that the Lord and this woman met because if you check the harmony of the Gospels, you will discover that just before this event, Jesus had given the following gracious invitation:

Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Luke 7:48-50, “Then He said to her, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’ Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this man who even forgives sins?’ And He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”

This woman is obeying the great commandment by loving the Lord with her entire being.

This woman in Luke 7:36-50 loved the Lord with the mentality of her soul by meditating upon what He did for in forgiving all her sins. She loved the Lord through the function of her volition by obeying His command to come to Him in faith for salvation. This woman loved the Lord affected her emotions as manifested by her tears of joy, which were in response to the forgiveness of her sins. She loved the Lord with her physical body as manifested by her bowing at His feet and serving Him by pouring the expensive perfume on His feet. This woman’s love for
the Lord caused her to sacrifice for the Lord and to forget herself and to be consumed by Him.

Sometimes when we love the Lord it will result in us being publicly ridiculed, as was the case with the woman being publicly ridiculed by Simon. Love for the Lord manifests itself in giving to the Lord, as was the case with this woman who bought a very expensive alabaster vial of perfume for the Lord that was beyond her means.

Grace giving is a demonstration and expression of the love of God in our lives. God demonstrated His love for us by “giving” His Son.

**John 3:16, “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.”**

**Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”**

God is the greatest giver because He is greatest lover (Eph. 2:8-9; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; 1 Tim. 6:13; James 1:5). God gives to mankind on the basis of His grace policy, which means that no one earns or deserves blessing from God, it is on a non-meritorious basis (Eph. 2:8-9).

Grace is God giving of Himself and His provision of the Person, Work and Life of His Son Jesus Christ. We are to demonstrate our love by giving as well. If we love the Lord we will give to members of the body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head.

Remember this principle: We are to love the Lord in our fellow believer.

**Matthew 25:39-40, “When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”**

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded believers to give generously (Matt. 5:42; 10:8; Luke 6:30, 38). The apostle Paul taught that the church age believer is to contribute to the needs of the royal family of God (Rom. 12:13). The apostle Paul reminded pastor-teacher’s at Pastor’s conference to help members of the royal family of God in need and then reminds them of our Lord’s doctrinal teaching on the subject of giving (Acts 20:35).

The Macedonians obeyed the command to give generously and therefore, demonstrated their divine love for the Body of Christ and thus for the Lord since He is the Head of the Body (2 Cor. 8:1-6).

Robert Rodenmayer said, “There are three kinds of giving: grudge giving, duty giving, and thanksgiving. Grudge giving says, “I hate to,” duty giving says, “I ought to,” thanksgiving says, “I want to.” The first comes from constraint, the second from a sense of obligation, the third from a full heart. Nothing much is
conveyed in grudge giving since “the gift without the giver is bare.” Something more happens in duty giving, but there is no song in it. Thanksgiving is an open gate into the love of God.”

We are to give purposefully from careful and prayerful planning. “Let each one do just as he has purposed (planned beforehand) in his heart” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Scripture has a tremendous amount to say about money or material possessions. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus deal with money. One out of every ten verses in the New Testament deal with this subject.

Scripture has 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but over 2,000 verses on the subject of money. Money is an extremely important issue because a person’s attitude toward it is so determinative of his relationship with God, on fulfilling his purpose in this life, and on his character.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:2 instructs the believers in Corinth in the manner in which they were to give.

1 Corinthians 16:2, “On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.”

Regularly: “On the first day of every week” helps promote diligence and disciplined giving. This creates a consistency and regularity that translates good intentions into actions (1 Cor. 16:2).

Personally: “Let each one of you” brings out the need for every believer to take giving as a personal responsibility for which God holds us each responsible (1 Cor. 16:2).

Systematically: “Put aside and save” brings out the need to have a method or system whereby money for the Lord’s work is specifically set aside, stored up for giving, so that it is not used for other things (1 Cor. 16:2).

Proportionately: In the New Testament, giving is to be in proportion to how God has prospered you (1 Cor. 16:2).

Who do we give to so that we can demonstrate the love of God in our lives?

The Local Church: “And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches” (Gal. 6:6; cf. also 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

1 Corinthians 9:14, “So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”

If the local church is to form a solid home base for other ministries of outreach, it is only logical that it should become a first priority for our giving.

Other Organizations and Individuals: This would include missions, para-church groups and individuals who are involved in these ministries (3 John 5-8).

Fellow Believers in Need: Those unable to support themselves or who have faced serious problems are to be helped as we are able. Those who refuse to work
are not to be supported (1 John 3:17; Jam. 2:15-16; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 10:33-34; 13:1-3 with 2 Thess. 3:6-10).

Unbelievers in Need: Our first priority is to those who are of the household of faith, but we are also to reach out to others in need as we are able (Gal. 6:10).

Now, in Romans 8:28, the verb *agapao* is employed with the believer as the subject and God the Father as the object and means, “to divinely love” since this love originates in the essence of God, thus it is divine in quality and character (1 Jn. 4:7-8).

As we have noted the greatest manifestation of God’s love was at the Cross-when God the Father sacrificed His Son and the Son willingly received the imputation of the sins of the entire world-past, present and future and was judged for them (Rm. 5:6-8; 1 Jn. 3:16; 4:10). This imputation set up the impeccable humanity of Christ to receive the judgment for the sins of every person in human history-past, present and future.

The judgment took place when the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union was separated from the Father during those last three hours of darkness upon the Cross, which constituted the judgment for our sins. Therefore, God’s love has been manifested in history in and through the unique Person of the cosmos, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s love as manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross has been recorded in the pages of Scripture by the Holy Spirit as witnessed by the apostles and New Testament writers.

God’s love in the Person and Work of Christ is presented in the Gospel to the unbeliever. The one who responds to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and accepts by faith God’s love as manifested in the Person and Work of Christ receives eternal life and will live with God forever and receives the capacity to experience fellowship with the Trinity and the holiness of God. This response in faith by the unbeliever to the love of God as manifested in the Person and Work of Christ is expressed by obedience to the command to believe in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved (Acts 16:31; Jn. 3:16-17).

After salvation, the Holy Spirit through the Word of God continues to make known and understandable God’s love for the believer (Rm. 5:5; Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21).

As we have noted, the believer is commanded in Scripture to love God, his enemies, his neighbor as himself and as Christ has loved. In order for the believer have the capacity to execute these commands, he must first acknowledge and then accept by faith God’s love for him that was manifested in the death, resurrection and session of Christ, which is revealed by the Spirit in the Word of God.

God’s love was also expressed at salvation through the Baptism of the Spirit, when the believer was placed permanently in union with Christ and was identified
with Him in His death, burial, resurrection and session at the right hand of the Father (cf. Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 6:1-10). Therefore, the believer who obeys the command to love one another as Christ loved has responded to God’s love for him.

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

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

This love was manifested through the Person and Work of Christ, His resurrection and session and at salvation when God through the Baptism of the Spirit identified the believer with Christ in His death, resurrection and session. The Holy Spirit reproduces God’s love in the believer when the believer obeys the Lord Jesus Christ’s command in John 13:34 to love one another as He has loved (Gal. 5:22-23). Thus, the noun *agape* means, “divine-love” and the verb *agapao* means, “to divinely love” when the believer is the subject and the object of his love is either God or his fellow believer or fellow human being in general.

So in Romans 8:28, the verb *agapao* is used with the Christian as the subject and the Father as the object. It refers to the Christian’s obedience to the Spirit’s command in the Word of God to love God and one’s fellow believer and fellow human being who is unsaved. This obedience manifests the Christian’s love for God. The Christian receives the capacity to execute this command by accepting by faith the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God of the Father’s love for them as revealed in the Person and Work of His Son Jesus Christ. God’s love is also revealed through the various ministries of the Holy Spirit from regeneration to resurrection. Therefore, the Christian’s love for God is an act of divine love since the Christian’s love for God is based upon and finds its source and motivation from God’s love for him.

The present tense of the verb *agapao* does not indicate a “temporal” condition but rather a “characteristic” of all Christians since it is a “gnomic” present used to make a statement of a general, timeless fact or in other words, an eternal spiritual truth.

Another example of this use of the present tense is found with the present tense of the verb *eimi*, “is” in John’s statement “God is love” that appears in 1 John 4:8, which is also a “gnomic” present indicating that love is a “characteristic” of God.

In the same way, the present tense of *agapao* in Romans 8:28 is indicating a “characteristic” of the Christian, namely that he loves God. In fact, only a Christian has the capacity to love of God since an unbeliever does not have the capacity to do so.

The “gnomic” present of the verb *agapao* in Romans 8:28 indicates that the Spirit works together all things for good for the benefit of those Christians who are “characterized” as loving God. This is in contrast to the unbeliever who does not
have the capacity to love God and has no capacity to become like Christ (“the good”) since he has not accepted Christ as Savior. In fact the unbeliever is characterized by hostility and anger towards God (Ephesians 2:1-3).

A “temporal” condition would indicate that Paul is saying that as long as you love God, everything will work for the good, i.e. conformity to Christ and if you don’t love God, things won’t work together for the good, i.e. you won’t be conformed to the image of Christ. This is not what Paul is saying since the context is clear that Paul is assuring his readers that they will be perfected and conformed into the image of Christ in a resurrection body regardless of the circumstances, good or bad since he uses both “for good,” which refers to conformity to the image of Christ.

Further indicating that there is no temporal condition expressed by the present tense of agapao is Paul’s statements in Romans 8:29-30, which speak of the Christian’s conformity to the image of Christ, the Christian’s future glorification in a resurrection body, as the inevitable outcome of those who love God. This glorification of the Christian in a resurrection body and his conformity to the image of Christ is “not” dependent on how much the Christian loves God but rather it is based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Lastly, in Romans 8:38-39, Paul explicitly states that nothing can separate the Christian from the love of God, which by implication would include even the Christian’s many failures to love God by being obedient to Him.

So Paul’s statements in Romans 8:28-30 assure the Christian that God will perfect and complete his plan for them to be conformed into the image of Christ. There is no hint of an idea that the temporal condition of loving God must be met by the Christian in order for God’s plan for them to be conformed into the image of Christ to be completed. In fact, Paul’s certainty that the Spirit works all things together for good, or in other words, for the purpose of conforming the Christian into the image of Christ is based upon what God has done for them through the Spirit identifying them with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-10).

Therefore, they are guaranteed to be glorified in a resurrection body and conformed perfectly to the image of Christ. Thus, the present tense of agapao in Romans 8:28 is a “gnomic” present indicating a “characteristic” of all Christians regardless if they are active in their love for God or not. This eliminates any idea of the temporal condition of loving God to be met by the Christian in order for their conformity to the image of Christ to take place. It will take place regardless of their negative or positive decisions in time with regards to their relationship with God and whether they are loving Him or not. This is Paul’s emphasis in his statements in Romans 8:28-39.
So Paul’s statement that the Spirit works all things together for the good, i.e. conformity to the image of Christ for those who love God is found in the context where Paul is emphasizing the eternal security of the believer.

To say that loving God is a condition that must be met in order that the Spirit can work all things together for the good, or in order that they might be conformed to the image of Christ disregards the context before Romans 8:28 and after in which Paul in both instances guarantees that the Christian will be conformed to the image of Christ.

In Romans 8:28, Paul is teaching that God guarantees that the Christian will be conformed to the image of Christ and that regardless of the circumstances, whether good or bad in the Christian’s life, God’s purpose to conform the Christian into the image of Christ will be accomplished. Therefore, in Romans 8:28, the gnomic present tense of the verb agapao describes the Christian as someone who is characterized by love for God in contrast to the unbeliever who is hostile towards God.

Only the Christian has the capacity to love God since the Spirit, who indwells the Christian, enables the Christian to love God and his fellow believer and the unbeliever. The unbeliever does not have the Spirit and cannot be characterized as loving God.

In Romans 8:28, the definite article preceding the participle form of the verb agapao functions as a substantiver meaning that it converts the participle into a substantive. Therefore, it indicates that the participle has a substantival function, which is reflected by translating the article with a relative pronoun phrase and since the verb is plural in number as well, we can translate the article “the one who.”

The substantival participle form of the verb agapao functions as a “dative of advantage” meaning that “for the benefit of” those who love God the Father, the Spirit works all things together for good. This is a simple active voice indicating that the subject produces the action of the verb. Thus, this simple active voice indicates that the subject, who can be any believer, performs the action of loving the Father.

Therefore, we will translate tois agaposin, “for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“God” is the articular accusative masculine singular form of the noun theos (θεός), which refers to God the Father as indicated by its articular construction,
which is “anaphoric” meaning that the word was used in Romans 8:27 and that its meaning in that verse is being used again here in Romans 8:28.

Romans 8:26-27, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings. That is, the one who, as an eternal spiritual truth, searches our hearts, knows perfectly and intimately what is eternally the Spirit’s mind-set because He always intercedes on behalf of the saints in accordance with God the Father’s will.”

In Romans 8:27, the noun theos refers to God the Father since the Scriptures teach that He is the author of the plan of salvation for mankind and the church age believer, thus, it is His will that is spoken of here in Romans 8:27. Therefore, in Romans 8:28, the articular construction of theos indicates that the word was used in Romans 8:27 and that its meaning in that verse is retained here in Romans 8:28.

The noun theos functions as an “accusative direct object” meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb agapao indicating that God the Father is the object of the Christian’s love.

We will translate theos, “God the Father.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“Work together” is the third person singular present active indicative form of the verb sunergeo (συνέργεω) (soon-erg-eh-o), which is a compound word composed of the preposition sun, “with” and the verb ergazomai, “to work,” thus the word literally means, “to work with.”

There has been a long and considerable debate as evidenced by the addition among the early Egyptian witnesses of the subject “God.” The debate is regarding whether or not Paul intended to say in original text of Romans 8:28 that “we know that for those who love God all things work together for good” or did he say, “we know that for those who love God, He works all things together for their good.”

The first reading is the traditional one and is found in the King James. If the latter is the case, then who is “He,” the Father or the Spirit?

There are several factors that indicate that the traditional reading is incorrect and that the latter reading is correct and that “He” is a reference to the Spirit rather than the Father.
First of all, as Gordon Fee points out Paul never uses *panta*, “**all things**” as the subject of an active verb (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588). He states that the only exceptions are in response to the slogan, “**all things are permitted**” where Paul keeps the “formula” intact with “**but not all things profit/edify**” (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23) (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588).

Fee also points out that where *panta* appears as the object of a personal verb, it almost always precedes the verb as we have here in Romans 8:28 (See 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 2:10; 9:12, 23, 25; 10:31; 11:2; 13:7 [4x]; 14:26; 15:27; 16:14; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 7:14; Ephesians 1:22; 6:21) (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588).

Furthermore, he states that in the two other occurrences of this verb *sunergeo* in the writings of Paul (1 Corinthians 16:16; 2 Corinthians 6:1), this verb has a personal subject (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588). This leaves us with the question as to whether “God (the Father)” or “the Spirit” is the more natural antecedent to the “He” that functions as the subject of the verb *sunergeo*, “**works together.**”

The evidence for “God (the Father)” is the fact that God is most recently mentioned personal noun since it is found in the phrase “**those who love God.**” Thus, it would function as the natural antecedent.

Further support for “God” is that God is clearly the subject in the verbs that appear in Romans 8:29. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that God is the subject of the verb *sunergeo* in Romans 8:28. However, there is weighty evidence for “the Spirit” as the subject of the verb *sunergeo* in Romans 8:28.

First of all, there is the context. In Romans 8:1-27, the Holy Spirit has been the conceptual subject throughout. In these verses Paul has been teaching and reminding his readers as to the various ministries of the Holy Spirit on their behalf. In fact, in the immediate context in Romans 8:26-27, the Spirit is the grammatical subject where Paul has been discussing the intercessory prayer ministry of the Spirit on behalf of the Christian. The most natural way to read Romans 8:28 would be to assume the continuation of the same subject, the Spirit as in Romans 8:26-27. Also we must take into consideration that beginning in Romans 8:16-27, Paul has been using *sun*-compound verbs, which carry through to Romans 9:1. In several of these verbs, the Holy Spirit is the subject. This is the case in Romans 8:16 where the Spirit is the subject of the verb *summartureo*, “bears witness to.”

**Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, bears witness to our human spirit that we are, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s children.”**

In Romans 8:26, the Spirit is the subject of the verb *sunantilambanomai*, “assists.”
Romans 8:26, “Furthermore, in the same way, the Spirit, as an eternal spiritual truth, also assists with our weakness because we are totally uncertain as to what to pray for in accordance with that which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely essential but rather the Spirit Himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, intercedes on behalf of us with inexpressible groanings.”

Therefore, in Romans 8:28, it is not unreasonable to assume that Paul is continuing his discussion regarding the work of the Spirit by using the Spirit as the subject of the παρεξήγειν, “works together.”

Taking this evidence into consideration makes the best sense of the way Romans 8:28 begins with the expression οἴδαμεν δὲ, “we know without a doubt.”

Commenting on this Fee points out, “Even though verses 29-30 clearly indicate that these several clauses are intended to bring to conclusion the argument that began in verse 17, these introductory words otherwise appear as an interruption, thus making verse 28 as a whole something of an intrusion. But if we take ‘the Spirit’ to be the natural subject of the sentence, then these opening words respond directly to the beginning of verse 26, that, ‘we do not know’ for what to pray as we ought (οὐκ οἴδαμεν). The Spirit therefore prays in our behalf, and thus ‘we do know that’ He is working all things together for good.” (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588)

Now, it must be noted that if the Father was the subject of παρεξήγειν in Romans 8:28, the Christian would still have the same assurance. Again Fee makes writes, “By reading the text in this contextually more natural way one keeps the subject matter flowing toward the final conclusion of verses 29-30, when Paul returns to the eschatological note struck in verse 17. The Spirit not only aids us as we pray in the Spirit, by speaking ‘inarticulate groanings’ in our behalf that are well understood by God, but in so doing encourages us to trust the Spirit thus to work all things together for our ultimate good, as we are being conformed by that same Spirit into the image of God.” (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, page 588)

Also, further indicating that the Spirit is the subject of the verb παρεξήγειν in Romans 8:28 and not God the Father is that in Scripture the Father is always seen active or working in the life of the Christian through the agency of the Spirit!

In Romans chapter eight, Paul has been discussing that God works in the life of the Christian through the Spirit who appropriates the Christian’s deliverance from the sin nature accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Romans chapter eight clearly teaches that it is the Spirit and not the Father or the Son who enables or empowers the Christian to experience sanctification. The Father completes the Christian’s sanctification through the omnipotence of the Spirit as clearly taught by Paul in Romans 8:11.
Romans 8:11, “However, if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument the Spirit, proceeding from the One (the Father) who raised the unique Person of Jesus from the dead ones, does dwell in all of you. Of course, He does! Then, the One (the Father) who raised Christ from the dead ones, will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who does permanently dwell in all of you.”

Therefore, since God works on behalf of the Christian through the agencies of His Son and the Spirit, the verb sunergeo could not have the Father as the subject. Also, it was the Father’s plan for the Christian to become conformed to the image of Christ. However, it is the Spirit who is the agency the Father uses to accomplish this for the Christian.

So in Romans 8:28, the verb sunergeo has the Spirit as its subject and denotes that the Spirit works through the adverse and prosperous circumstances in the Christian’s life for good in the sense of conforming the Christian into the image of Christ.

The present tense of the verb sunergeo is a “gnomic present,” which is used for a general timeless fact or spiritual axiom, or an eternal spiritual truth. This indicates that the Spirit “as an eternal spiritual truth” works all things together for good for those who love God.

The present tense can also be interpreted as a “customary” present denoting an ongoing state, which would mean that the Spirit “always” works all things together for good for those who love the Father. Therefore, taken together, Paul is saying that the Spirit “as an eternal spiritual truth, always” works all things together for good for those who love the Father.

The active voice means that the subject performs the action of the verb. The subject in our present context is as we have established, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the active voice form of the verb denotes that the Spirit as the subject performs the action of working all things together for good for those who love the Father.

The indicative mood of the verb is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

Therefore, we will translate sunergeo, “He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works together.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works together…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”
“All things” is the accusative neuter plural form of the adjective *pas* (πάσα), which refers to the various circumstances in life and not simply adversity since any circumstance or anything in life, even the Christian’s sins, can by God’s grace contribute toward the “good,” which refers to conforming the Christian into the image of Christ. Therefore, since this is the case, Christians are commanded to give thanks in any and every type of circumstance that they might experience in life.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, “in all circumstances give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

No matter what our circumstances may be, we should be offering up thanksgiving, this is called a sacrifice of praise.

Hebrews 13:15-16, “Therefore, through Him (Jesus Christ) we should continue offering up a sacrifice of praise continually throughout all circumstances to God (the Father), that is the fruit of the lips, acknowledging His Person. In fact, you yourselves do not forget the unselfish performance of divine good of intrinsic value for with such sacrifices God the Father is greatly pleased.”

In Romans 8:28, the adjective *pas* functions as a substantive and in a “distributive” sense meaning that the Spirit works “each and every circumstance (in life)” together for good for those who love the Father.

God had figured into His plan every circumstance that the Christian would face in life and every negative and positive decision to His sovereign will so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself. This eternal plan is called the “divine decree” by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future. Therefore, God rendered certain to take place all that circumstances that the Christian would face in life and thus figured these various circumstances into His plan.

God’s decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist and so therefore, God rendered certain to occur all the various circumstances that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime and God decided that these things would exist.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God’s eternal and immutable will. Therefore, it was a part of God’s plan from eternity past that each and every circumstance the Christian would experience in life would take place.

The “providence” of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that all the circumstances that the Christian would experience during the course of
his lifetime do not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for them to take place in order to fulfill His plan for the Christian’s life and to bring glory to Himself.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God’s works and so it was a part of God’s chosen and adopted plan that each and every circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime would take place. The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. Therefore, it was part of God’s eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory that each and every circumstance that the Christian would face during the course of his lifetime would take place.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Therefore, the fact that each and every circumstance that the Christian would face during the course of his lifetime was the result of God’s sovereign will and omniscience by which this event was brought into being and was controlled and made subject to God’s pleasure and glorified Him.

The “decree of God” is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurition (i.e., that they will certainly take place). When I say “comprehending” I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by “determining” I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events. Therefore, the omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime.

God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. Therefore, each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime was sovereignly determined by God to take place and was known by God in eternity past before anything was created.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. Therefore, it was God’s eternal and immutable will that each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime would take place.
Furthermore, God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. In relation to the divine decree the will of God refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not.

The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time. God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime would take place. He also decided that these events would take place in the exact time that they did.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice.

In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime would all take place in time and even those circumstances and decisions, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle their decisions.

Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time the decisions that each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime and decreed that they would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle these circumstances. Therefore, each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime was a part of God’s sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime.
Each and every positive and negative circumstance that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime was figured into the divine decree and was a part of the providence of God, which is the outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory.

In Romans 8:28, the substantive use of the adjective *pas* also functions as an “accusative direct object” meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *sunergeo*. We will translate *pas*, “each and every circumstance.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“For good” is composed of the preposition *eis* (εἰς) (ice), “for” and the accusative neuter singular form of the adjective *agathos* (ἀγαθός) (ag-ath-os), “good.”

The adjective *agathos* appears throughout Greek literature, both classical and Hellenistic. It came to be associated with that which was perfect or excellent and with that which distinguished itself by its value or worth.

The Attic authors and philosophers commonly used *kalos* or *agathos* to explain the total summary of the qualities, which an Attic man of honor displayed. It was used in a substantive sense meaning to do what is “good.”

Although there is at times some semantic overlap with *kalos*, there are some different nuances between the two. First of all, *kalos* suggests aesthetic beauty, usefulness, fitness while *agathos* acquires philosophical and ethical connotations. The word assumes a predominately religious meaning in the Septuagint where it denotes the “goodness” of God as demonstrated by His deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians (Exodus 18:9; Numbers 10:32; Hosea 8:3).

*Agathos* was used to identify God and to describe His creation and works in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament and expresses the significance or excellence of a person or thing.

In the Greek New Testament, the adjective means, “what is intrinsically valuable, what is intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent.”

*Agathos* is used in the New Testament primarily of that which is divine in quality and character and is beneficial to others.

Vine commenting on the word, writes, “*Agathos* describes that which, being ‘good’ in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect; it is used (a) of things physical, e. g., a tree, Matt 7:17; ground, Luke 8:8; (b) in a moral sense,

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature lists the following definitions: (1) Adjective, (a) external sense fit, capable, useful; of persons, of things (b) of inner worth, especially moral, of person, perfect of God, of things (2) Used as pure substantive (a) the good, what is good, right, what is intrinsically valuable, morally good; advantage, good (b) good things, possessions, treasures, possessions of a higher order, good deeds (pages 2-3).

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon defines agathos: (1) of a good constitution or nature (2) useful, salutary (3) of the feeling awakened by what is good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy (4) excellent, distinguished (5) upright, honorable; benevolent, kind, generous; a good thing, convenience, advantage, goods, riches; of the benefits of the Messianic kingdom; what is upright, honorable, and acceptable to God (page 2-3).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following meanings, “good, profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, virtuous” (page 2).

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains list the following meanings for the noun: (1) positive moral qualities of the most general nature – ‘good, goodness, good act’ (volume 2, page 743). (2) pertaining to having the proper characteristics or performing the expected function in a fully satisfactory way – ‘good, nice, pleasant’ (volume 2, page 623). (3) pertaining to being generous, with the implication of its relationship to goodness – ‘generous’ (volume 2, page 570). (4) (occurring only in the plural): possessions which provide material benefits, usually used with reference to movable or storable possessions rather than real estate – ‘goods, possessions’ (volume 2, page 562).

This is the tenth time that we have seen the adjective agathos in our studies of the book of Romans (2:7, 10; 3:8; 5:7; 7:12, 13 twice).

In Romans 2:7, the word refers to that which is divine in quality and character and describes the work of God in conforming the believer into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in time resulting in Christ-likeness or spiritual maturity, the maximum production of Christ-like character in the believer in time.

This divine work began the moment the believer expressed faith alone in Christ alone and continues after salvation in the believer who obeys the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God and which work will be completed at the resurrection of the church.
Romans 2:7, “On the one hand, according to perseverance, which produces work that is divine in quality and character: glory and honor and immortality for the benefit of those who as a lifestyle make it a top priority to diligently and tenaciously pursue after eternal life, sparing no effort for it is of the highest value.”

In Romans 2:10, the adjective describes the work the Christian produces, which is “divine in quality and character” since it is produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit when the believer is obedient to the Word God and which obedience is motivated by love for the Lord and is reflected in one’s thoughts, words and actions.

Romans 2:10, “But not only this, there will be glory and honor and peace for the benefit of each and every one who works hard to accomplish the good, which is divine in quality and character, for both the Jew first and also the Greek.”

In Romans 3:8, the adjective agathos is in the plural and refers to “blessings” that result from perpetrating evil acts since the verb erchomai emphasizes the results from performing an action.

Romans 3:8, “Furthermore, what is the conclusion that we are forced to? (As we have been slanderously charged with in the past and continue to be up to the present moment and as some have in the past alleged we say and continue to do so up to the present moment), ‘Let us perpetrate evil acts in order that blessings might result.’ No! Their condemnation is, as an eternal spiritual truth, deserved.”

Then, lastly, the word appears in Romans 5:7 where it describes a person who is generous, helpful, considerate and sympathetic towards his fellow human being, which causes those who have benefited from his gracious actions to have personal love and affection for him.

Romans 5:7, “For, it is unlikely, anyone will die as a substitute for the benefit of a righteous person. In fact, possibly, someone might also have the courage to voluntarily die as a substitute for the benefit of the good person.”

In Romans 7:12, the adjective describes the tenth commandment as being “intrinsically valuable, intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent” since it originates from the perfect character and nature of God. It expresses the perfect character and nature of God and His attitude towards His moral rational creatures.

The word describes the tenth commandment as having man’s best interests in mind and is not designed to hurt him. In Romans 7:12-13, the adjective was used to describe the tenth commandment as being “intrinsically valuable, intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable,
useful, benefiting others, benevolent” since it originates from the perfect nature of God.

Romans 7:12-13, “Therefore, indeed, the Law is, as an eternal spiritual truth holy. Furthermore, the tenth commandment is, as an eternal spiritual truth holy and in addition righteous as well as good. Therefore, did that which is good cause temporal spiritual death in me? Absolutely not! On the contrary, the sin nature caused temporal spiritual death in me in order that the sin nature would be exposed by repeatedly producing temporal spiritual death in me by means of that which is good in order that by means of the tenth commandment, the sin nature would demonstrate itself extraordinarily sinful in character.”

In this passage, it expresses the perfect character and nature of God and His attitude towards His moral rational creatures. The word describes the tenth commandment as having man’s best interests in mind and is not designed to hurt him.

In Romans 7:18, Paul used the word to describe himself and in particular his physical body as indicated by the qualifying or epexegetical statement tout’ estin en te sarki mou, “that is, in my flesh.”

Romans 7:18, “For you see, I know as a fact through experience, namely that absolutely nothing good, as an eternal spiritual truth, dwells in me, that is, in my flesh because the desire is, as an eternal spiritual truth, present in me, however, the capacity to produce that which is perfect, is, as an eternal spiritual truth absolutely not.”

It is used with ou to describe Paul’s physical body as not having anything “intrinsically valuable, intrinsically good, inherently good in quality” in it since the sin nature indwells it.

Then in Romans 7:19, the adjective agathos is used of obedience to the Law, which is indicated by the verb poieo, “I do.” It therefore describes from God’s perspective that obedience to the Law is “intrinsically valuable, intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent” since it is in conformity to God’s sovereign will.

In Romans 8:28, the adjective agathos means, “divine good of intrinsic quality and character” and refers to conforming the Christian into the image of Jesus Christ as indicated by the prepositional phrase kata prothesin, “according to His purpose” that appears in Romans 8:28 and by Paul’s statements in Romans 8:29-30.

Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and
these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

In Romans 2:7 and Philippians 1:6, the noun *ergon* appears with the adjective *agathos*, which is modifying the noun.

Romans 2:7, “On the one hand, according to perseverance, which produces work that is divine in quality and character: glory and honor and immortality for the benefit of those who as a lifestyle make it a top priority to diligently and tenaciously pursue after eternal life, sparing no effort for it is of the highest value.”

Philippians 1:6, “I am confident of this very same thing, namely that, the One (God the Holy Spirit) who began in all of you a good work that is divine in quality and character, will bring it to completion up to the day of Christ who is Jesus.”

In Philippians 1:6 and Romans 2:7, the “work, which is divine in quality and character” refers to conforming the believer into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. This divine work began the moment the believer expressed faith alone in Christ alone and continues after salvation in the believer who obeys the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God and which work will be completed at the resurrection of the church.

The Father’s purpose for extending us grace, for crucifying us with Christ and burying us with Him as well as raising and seating us with Christ at His right hand is so that we might become conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ. The sole objective of God the Father saving us, justifying, sanctifying and glorifying us through His Son Jesus Christ is so that we might become like His Son Jesus Christ and by doing so bring many sons to glory. His purpose for giving us a new nature, the nature of Christ, the mind of Christ and the Spirit of Christ is so that we might become like His Son Jesus Christ.

The “good work” of conforming the believer into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ “cannot” take place in time after salvation unless the believer is in fellowship, which the Lord called in the Vine and the Branches metaphor, “abide in Me.”

The Vine and the Branches metaphor in John 15 teaches the believer the importance of staying in fellowship with Christ in order that the Holy Spirit might bear fruit through them, which is analogous to Christ-like character.

John 15:1-4, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.”
“Abide” is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person plural aorist active imperative form of the verb *meno* (μένω), which means, “to remain” on the vine.

The verb *meno* in John 15:4 is used metaphorically and expresses the analogy that just as a branch must “remain” on a vine in order for it to produce fruit so the believer must “remain” in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in order that the Holy Spirit might reproduce the character of Christ in the believer’s life.

**John 15:5-11,** “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

In John 15:1-11, the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples that there are four categories of believers mentioned in John 15: (1) “Does not bear fruit” refers to believer’s who are disobedient to the Lord’s teaching to love and serve one another self-sacrificingly and who die the sin unto death (1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Co. 11:30). (2) “Bears fruit” refers to the *minimum* production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit. (3) “More fruit” refers to *moderate* production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit. (4) “Much fruit” refers to the *maximum* production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

The greater the obedience by the believer to the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love and serve his fellow believer self-sacrificially, the greater the production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit. The production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit is in direct proportion to the degree that the believer is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love and serve his fellow believer self-sacrificially.

The believer who is obedient to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit to the believer through the communication of the Word of God, will experience fellowship whereas the disobedient believer will not.

Failure to remain in fellowship after salvation does not hinder God from completed this “good work” since the resurrection does not involve the believer’s volition but it does hinder the Spirit’s work in time after salvation prior to the resurrection.

**1 Thessalonians 5:19,** “Do not make it a habit of hindering the Spirit.”
Ephesians 4:30, “Do not make it a habit to grieve the Holy Spirit by means of whom all of you have been sealed for the day of redemption.”

The failure to remain in fellowship after salvation will result in loss of rewards at the Bema Seat (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 John 2:28).

The number one objective of the Holy Spirit after salvation is to reproduce the character of Christ in the believer.

**Galatians 4:19, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until the character of Christ is formed in all of you.”**

Character involves three things: (1) Thoughts (2) Words (3) Actions.

The Father desires that the believer’s “thoughts, words and action” be in conformity to His Son’s.

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 is simply the characteristics of Christ that are reproduced by the Holy Spirit in the believer who is obedient to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit to the believer through the communication of the Word of God, which is the mind of Christ.

**Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”**

The work of the Holy Spirit in conforming the believer into the image of Jesus Christ is accomplished in three stages and is related to the believer’s sanctification.

“Sanctification” is a technical theological term for the believer who has been set apart through the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation in order to serve God exclusively and is accomplished in three stages: (1) Positional (2) Experiential (3) Ultimate.

The “baptism of the Spirit” takes place exclusively during the dispensation of the church age and is accomplished at the moment of salvation when the omnipotence of the Spirit places the believer in an eternal union with Christ, thus identifying the believer positionally with Christ in His death, resurrection and session.

**1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”**

“Baptized” is the verb *baptizo* (βαπτίζω), “to cause the believer to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ.”

At the moment of salvation, the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Positional sanctification” is the believer’s “entrance” into the plan of God for the church age resulting in eternal security as well as two categories of positional
truth (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Thess. 5:23; Eph. 5:26-27; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 6:3, 8; 2 Thess. 2:13).

“Retroactive” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His death and burial (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12).

“Current” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His resurrection, ascension and session (See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-4).

Colossians 3:1, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

In Romans 6:3-5, Paul teaches concerning both retroactive and current positional truth.

Romans 6:3-5, “Or, are some of you in a state of ignorance concerning the fact that all of us who have been identified with Christ, who is Jesus, have been identified with His spiritual death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism with respect to His physical death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead ones through the glory of the Father, in the same way, we, ourselves will also walk in the realm of an extraordinary life. Therefore, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that we are entered into union with Him, conformed to His physical death. Of course, we believe this is true. Then, certainly, we will also be united with Him, conformed to His resurrection.”

“Positional sanctification”: (1) What God has done for the church age believer. (2) His viewpoint of the church age believer. (3) Sets up the potential to experience sanctification in time. (4) Provides the believer with the guarantee of receiving a resurrection body.

“Experiential sanctification” is the function of the church age believer’s spiritual life in time through obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God (John 17:17; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 7; 1 Tim. 2:15).

2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”

“Experiential sanctification” is the post-salvation experience of the church age believer who is in fellowship with God by confessing any known sin to the Father when necessary followed by obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the Word of God.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”
1 John 2:5, “But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

Sanctification is experienced by the believer who submits to the desires of the Spirit, which constitutes being filled with the Spirit, which is commanded of the Christian in Ephesians 5:18.

Romans 8:5-6, “For you see those who at any time exist in the state of being in submission to the flesh are, as an eternal spiritual truth, preoccupied with the things produced by the flesh. However, those in submission to the Spirit, the things produced by the Spirit. In fact, the mind-set produced by the flesh is, as an eternal spiritual truth temporal spiritual death. However, the mind-set produced by the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth life as well as peace.”

Ephesians 5:18: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit.”

This obedience also constitutes obeying the command to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

This obedience enables the Spirit to reproduce the character of Christ in the believer.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Experiential sanctification is only a potential since it is contingent upon the church age believer responding to what God has done for him at the moment of salvation, therefore, only believers who are obedient to the Word of God will experience sanctification in time. It is obeying the command of Romans 6:11 to consider oneself dead to the sin nature and alive to God.

Romans 6:11, “In the same way, also, on the one hand, all of you without exception make it your habit to regard yourselves as dead ones with respect to the sin nature while on the other hand those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, alive with respect to God the Father, in union with Christ, who is Jesus.”

The believer experiences sanctification by obeying the teaching of the Word of God, which states that the believer has been crucified, died, buried, raised and
seated with Christ and which teaching is inspired by the Holy Spirit (See Romans 6).

“Ultimate sanctification” is the perfection of the church age believer’s spiritual life at the Rapture, i.e. resurrection of the church, which is the completion of the plan of God for the church age believer (1 Cor. 15:53-54; Gal. 6:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; John 6:40). It is the guarantee of a resurrection body and will be experienced by every believer regardless of their response in time to what God has done for them at salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Sanctification is experiencing the holiness or in other words manifesting the character of God through one’s thoughts, words and actions.

1 Peter 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’”

In Romans 8:28, the preposition eis functions as a marker of purpose indicating that for those who love the Father, the Spirit works each and every circumstance in life together “for the purpose” of good, i.e. conformity to the image of Christ.

The anarthrous construction of the adjective agathos as the object of the preposition eis is definite emphasizing individual identity.

We will translate the prepositional phrase eis agathon, “for the good.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“To those who are” is the articular dative masculine plural present active participle form of the verb eimi (εἰμί) (i-mee), which means, “to belong to a particular class of individuals.” It refers to “belonging to a particular class of individuals” in the human race who are identified by Paul with the adjective kletos, which means, “the called ones.”

The verb functions as a “substantive” participle as indicated by the definite article preceding it, which functions as a substantiver meaning that it converts the participle into a substantive, which is reflected by translating the article with the relative pronoun, “the ones who.”
The present tense is also a “gnomic present,” which is used of a general timeless fact or eternal spiritual truth. Therefore, the “gnomic” present says that for those who love the Father, the Spirit works each and every circumstance in life together for the good, for the benefit of those who are, “as an eternal spiritual truth” the chosen ones.

The active voice is “stative” meaning that the subject exists in the state indicating by the verb. This indicates that for those who love the Father, the Spirit works each and every circumstance in life together for the good, for the benefit of those who are “existing in a state of” being the called ones.

The articular substantive participle form of the verb eimi functions also as a “dative of advantage” meaning that for those who love the Father, the Spirit works each and every circumstance in life together for the good, “for the benefit of” those who are the called ones.

We will translate the verb eimi, “for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good, for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“Called” is the dative masculine plural form of the adjective kletos (κλητός) (klay-tos), which means, “chosen one.” This word does not refer to the “call of God,” which is related to “common grace” meaning grace given to all sinners by God in the form of being exposed to the gospel. In other words, it does not refer to the “invitation” to receive the gift of salvation by trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior. Rather, it refers to those sinners who have responded to the divine invitation or call of God when they were presented the gospel and have exercised faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Thus, it is an “effectual call” as many commentators describe it.

Therefore, kletos means “chosen ones” since it refers to those sinners who have accepted Christ as Savior. By responding in faith they manifest in time that they have been elected to privilege by God. God who is omniscient looked down the corridors of time and saw that the Christian would trust in His Son Jesus Christ as Savior and had prepared in advance a plan for them and elected to privilege these justified sinners. Therefore, when the Christian placed his or her trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, he or she was manifesting the fact that they have been elected to privilege by the Father. He did not coerce the Christian’s volition by electing but
rather elected them to privilege when He saw through His omniscience that they would believe in His Son.

Election is never used in Scripture in relation to the unbeliever since 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 teach that God desires all men to be saved.

This word *kletos* describes the Christian as one who is “elected” to the privilege, responsibilities and blessings of obtaining salvation as well as an eternal relationship and fellowship with the Trinity and service to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 1:3-4**, “Worthy of praise and glorification is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who has blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in the Person of Christ. When He elected us to privilege in Him before the foundation of the world for the purpose of being holy and blameless before Him.”

God elected the believer before the foundation of the world in the sense that God, in His foreknowledge, which is based upon His omniscience, knew before anything was ever created, that we would believe in His Son in time. God elected the believer before the foundation of the world since He knew beforehand that the believer would accept Jesus Christ as Savior in time and therefore elected the believer to privilege.

Election means that God has a plan for your life, which is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

**Romans 8:28-30**, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Election is related to believers only and unbelievers are not elected to condemnation since God desires all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). When Paul teaches the Ephesians that they were chosen before the foundation of the world, he is referring to the doctrine of election.

Election is related to believers only. Unbelievers are not elected to condemnation since again God desires all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

God elected us before the foundation of the world in the sense that God, in His foreknowledge, which is based upon His omniscience, knew before anything was ever created, that we would believe in His Son in time. Therefore, He elected us to the privilege of entering into fellowship with Him based upon the merits of our union with Christ.
The believer’s election to privilege is a gift and irrevocable.

Romans 11:29, “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

Election is the expression of the sovereign will of God in eternity past (Eph. 1:4). It is God’s complete agreement with His own foreknowledge.

1 Peter 1:1-2, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

God has three kinds of knowledge: (1) Self-knowledge (2) Omniscience (3) Foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge acknowledges only what is in the decree of God, which is God’s eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurition (i.e., that they will certainly take place).

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God’s works. Election is declared through God’s foreknowledge.

God elected the believer before the foundation of the world since He knew beforehand that the believer would accept Jesus Christ as Savior in time and therefore elected the believer to privilege.

There are three elections to privilege in history: (1) Israel (Deut. 7:6-7; 10:15; 14:2; Isa. 14:1; 44:1; 45:4; 48:12; Isa. 65:9; Ezek. 20:5; Psa. 135:4; Acts 13:17; 15:7; Rom. 11:5, 7, 28). (2) Christ (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 12:18; Luke 9:35; 23:35; 1 Pet. 2:4-6). (3) Church (Rom. 8:30, 33; 9:24-26; 1 Cor. 1:27; Eph. 1:4, 18; 4:1, 4; Phil. 3:14; Col. 3:12, 15; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10; Tit. 1:1; Heb. 3:1; James 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:1, 15; 2:4, 9, 21; 3:9; 5:10, 13; 2 Pet. 1:3, 10; Rev. 17:14).

Election is based upon God’s grace policy meaning that the believer does not merit his election but rather receives it based upon the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

2 Timothy 1:8-9, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

We have been elected to privilege in order that we may be freed from the bondage of the old sin nature and that we might serve one another through love.
Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Election is an expression of God’s love for the believer.

1 John 3:1-3, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

We have been elected in order that we may live in the eternal life we received when we believed in Christ for salvation (1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 9:15).

1 Timothy 6:12, “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

We have been elected in order that we may receive eternal glory, which means that God is not only going to bless us with a resurrection body but also with an eternal inheritance, if we persevere and overcome (1 Pet. 5:10).

1 Peter 5:8-11, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

We have been elected in order that we may have fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9).

1 Corinthians 1:9, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We have been elected in order to form the body of Christ, which will be completed at the Rapture (Col. 3:15).

Colossians 3:15, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would be enlightened as to the confidence that this election can produce in them.

Ephesians 1:18-23, “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 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him 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 His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

The believer has a great responsibility to conduct himself in a manner worthy of his election to privilege.

Ephesians 4:1-3, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

God has elected us to sanctification and not immoral degeneracy.

1 Thessalonians 4:7, “For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.”

We have been elected in order that we may go through undeserved suffering for Christ’s sake.

1 Peter 2:18-25, “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.

WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Therefore, in Romans 8:28, the adjective *kletos* means, “chosen ones” and refers to the sinner who has accepted by faith Jesus Christ as his or her Savior and is now been justified and made a son and child of God and placed in union with Christ through the power of the Spirit.

The word functions as a substantive.

The word signifies that the Christian as one who is elected to the privilege, responsibilities and blessings of obtaining salvation as well as an eternal relationship and fellowship with the Trinity and service to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ.
It functions as a “dative of advantage” meaning that for those who love the Father, the Spirit works each and every circumstance in life together for the good, “for the benefit of” those who are the called ones.

We will translate kletos, “the chosen ones.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good, for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, the chosen ones…”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“According to His purpose” is composed of the preposition kata (κατά), “according to” and the accusative feminine singular form of the noun prothesis (προθεσίας) (proth-es-is), “His purpose.”

The noun prothesis is composed of the preposition pro, “before” and the verb tithemi, “to place, set, establish.” This word is from the verb protithemi, “to lay out, set before,” which we saw in Romans 1:13 and 3:25.

In classical Greek, prothesis is a “laying out” of something, a “placing in public,” such as a corpse and may indicate a “public notice” as well as “purpose.” It can mean “calculation, theme, thesis” (Liddell and Scott, page 1480-1481).

In the Septuagint, the noun prothesis is used to translate two Hebrew terms, namely, ma`arekheth, “layers, accessories” and `erekh, “lay out, put, set out” and paneh, “face, presence.”

Prothesis was used in regard to the “bread of presence” or “showbread” as the King James renders it, which was an offering required to be set forth continually in the presence of the Lord in the Holy of holies of the tabernacle.

The word appears twelve times in the Greek New Testament. The word appears in Matthew 12:4, Mark 2:26 and Luke 6:4, which are parallel references to David’s action of eating “showbread” (see 1 Samuel 21), which Jesus turns into an argument for His authority as the Lord of the Sabbath.

Prothesis is used in Hebrews 9:2 for the showbread. In Acts 11:23 and 27:13, the classical sense of “purpose” is found. The noun appears in 2 Timothy 3:10 where Paul exhorts Timothy to imitate his “purpose.” The remaining usages of the word appear in Romans 8:28, 9:11, Ephesians 1:11, 3:11 and 2 Timothy 1:9 and are related to the Father’s plan of salvation for mankind, which originated in eternity past. Thus, it means, “predetermined plan.”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”
Romans 9:11, “for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose (prothesis) according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls.”

Ephesians 1:7-11, “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace from which grace He has caused to abound toward us infinite wealth by means of all wisdom and understanding when He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His grace intention, which He has graciously purposed (protithemi) in Him. with reference to the dispensation of the fullness of the times to gather together in the Person of Christ those who are in heaven and those on the earth in Him. In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance when having been predestined according to a predetermined plan originating from the One who works all things according to the purpose (prothesis) of His will.”

Ephesians 3:8-11, “To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose (prothesis) which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Timothy 1:8-11, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose (prothesis) and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.”

In these passages, the word refers to that which is planned or purposed in advance. It refers to the “divine decree,” which is God the Father’s eternal plan in which He has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future.

God’s decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist and so therefore, God rendered certain to occur all the various circumstances that the Christian would experience during the course of his lifetime and God decided that these things would exist.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God’s eternal and immutable will.
The “providence” of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God’s works. The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification.

The “decree of God” is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurition (i.e., that they will certainly take place).

When I say “comprehending” I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by “determining” I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. In relation to the divine decree the will of God refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice. In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle their decisions.

The relationship between human volition and the sovereign will and purpose of God can be viewed from different perspectives, namely, the “permissive,” “directive” and “overruling” will of God.

The “directive” will of God refers to what God directly requires of an individual, His “permissive” will refers to Him “permitting” His creatures to act contrary to what He desires and His “overruling” will refers to the fact that at times God “overrules” the bad decisions of His creatures in order to perpetuate His plan.
In Romans 8:28, the noun *prothesis* refers to the “predetermined plan” of God the Father or in others words, the Father’s plan of salvation for mankind, which originated in eternity past and is also known as the “divine decree” of God.

In Romans 8:29-30, Paul goes onto to further elaborate regarding this “predetermined” plan of God the Father.

**Romans 8:29-30**, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. And these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

In the prepositional phrase “according to His purpose” the word “His” does not translate a word in the Greek text but is correctly added by the translators since it is clearly implied that Paul is omitting the genitive masculine third person singular form of the intensive personal pronoun *autos* (αὐτός) (ow-tos).

The word refers to the Father and functions as a “genitive of possession” indicating that this predetermined plan “belongs to” the Father.

The preposition *kata* with the accusative form of the noun *prothesis*, “predetermined plan” denotes conformity to a particular standard or policy. Therefore, *kata* specifies that the Christian is chosen by God and elected to privilege “in conformity to” or is “in accordance with” the Father’s predetermined plan.

We will translate the prepositional phrase *kata prothesin*, “in accordance with His predetermined plan.”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 8:28: “In fact, we know without a doubt that for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father, He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good, for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, the chosen ones, in accordance with His predetermined plan.”

The main statement in Romans 8:28 is “He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good.”

The clause “for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father” and the clause “for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, the chosen ones, in accordance with His predetermined plan” are subordinate to the main statement.

They are parallel descriptions for those whom “the Spirit as an eternal spiritual truth always works each and every circumstance together for the good.”

Paul is teaching in Romans 8:28 that the Christian is an individual who is characterized as loving God, which the unbeliever has no capacity whatsoever to
do since God can only be loved with His love. The Christian has the capacity to love God since He has accepted by faith God’s love for him and is taught to love God as God has loved Him. The unbeliever has not accepted by faith God’s love for him and refuses to be taught by God as to how to love like Him.

The Christian is also characterized in verse 28 as someone who is chosen by God according to His predetermined plan indicating that the Christian was in the mind of God from eternity past.

No one can stop God’s plans from being accomplished since His divine decree or eternal plan has taken into consideration both positive and negative decisions by His creatures and decreed that His sovereign will, will co-exist with the volition of men and angels.

The clause “for the benefit of those who are characterized as divinely loving God the Father” characterizes the Christian from the perspective of his attitude towards God. On the other hand, the clause “for the benefit of those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, the chosen ones, in accordance with His predetermined plan” characterizes the Christian from the perspective of God’s attitude towards him.

The main statement in Romans 8:28 is “He (the Spirit), as an eternal spiritual truth, always works each and every circumstance together for the good” makes clear to the Christian that both good and bad circumstances can never thwart God’ plan and are in fact figured into His plan for them to be conformed to the image of Christ.

This passage teaches that the member of the Trinity that it is actively working in the Christian’s life as an agent for both the Father and the Son to conform the Christian into the image of Christ is the Holy Spirit.