***David and Jonathan  
RO157-02***

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We are studying Romans 12:9-21. Our subject is "Christian Conduct," and this is segment number two.

**Love**

There is a lot of talk in the world today about love. Most of that talk refers to love in a sensual way, and a love which is self-centered, and with very little concern for anyone else who may be involved in the relationship. People talk about love, but they are really primarily interested in self-satisfaction, and they are not motivated by a great deal of permanent personal attachment. People proclaim love for others, but strangely enough, the very people for whom they have a love, and, for whose welfare they are concerned, calls upon them to plant bombs; to foment rebellion against authority; and, to lead riots in the streets – all under the guise of love. We have people who demand their rights while trampling upon those of others, and people who speak of love, but in public places will blow cigarette smoke in your face, demanding their rights, and trampling on the rights of others. And if someone should suggest that that is not fitting, and complain, then those people are accused of being very unloving.

There is a lot of confusion about this business of love. You've all been alerted of the horrible current news story of a 20-year-old who was rejected by a young lady, and who promptly responded with the love that he had for her by killing her and her brother and sister in a brutal, butchery, outrage. It's really strange – the response of someone who claims to have love.

**Compassion**

The word "compassion," you are well aware, is thrown around by political leaders today. But it is a compassion which is calculated to gain votes for positions of power. And that compassion is exercised for distributing public funds to those who will receive that benefit. And in turn, that will benefit the one who is delivering it. Real love doesn't expect anything in return. It is apart from the worthiness of the individual. It is a quality that is unnatural until God makes it natural within us.

**A Mental Attitude Love**

In Romans 12:9 the apostle Paul calls upon Christians to exercise an unhypocritical love for all human beings. The love of verse 9 is toward mankind in general. As we pointed out in the last session, this word "love" here is the Greek word "agape" which refers to a mental attitude of goodwill devoid of spiritual bitterness. And we went extensively into showing you how we know that that is the meaning of that word. And the reason I did that is because you must understand that, so that you can understand what God means by "love." If you do not understand the nature of this Greek word, you will be victimized by our society. They will talk about love, and you will be intimidated, unless you understand that there is a love which is the love which God extends toward us, and which He encourages and demands of us here, which begins in the mind. It is not an emotional, compassionate, blubbering expression. It is an attitude of mind, and it is not natural. It is the product of doctrine in the soul, and the filling of the Spirit of God within the believers. "Agape" love, therefore, is not possible for an unbeliever. It is not possible for a Christian who lacks doctrinal understanding, or a Christian who is carnal.

So, if you want to establish a relationship in life on friendship, or marriage, or business, or anything else, with people who are incapable of loving, you are playing a very dangerous game. And the character who cannot love (that mental attitude good will, and concern, and sacrificial involvement that God calls for, and which is characteristic of God – a person who cannot do that will be a grief in your life. If that person does not know doctrine, avoid him like the plague. If that person does not understand the principle of confessing known sins to maintain a position of spirituality, then avoid him or her. They will be a grief in your experience. Wait until they become something before you make an attachment. If you don't want to play it smart, that's one of the wonders of God's creation. You can do it your own way, and you have perfect freedom to blow yourself up if you want to do that. It is this genuine "agape" love in a believer that enables him (and it is only this that enables him) to appreciate God; to appreciate his mate; and, to appreciate his friends. "Agape" love is always stifled by unconfessed sins which build callouses upon the soul so that we are insensitive to the real thing.

**David and Jonathan**

I would like to illustrate this love for you from one of the great Old Testament relationships between two of the all-time great men of God: David; and, Jonathan. The beginning of the friendship between David and Jonathan was on the day that young David killed the giant Goliath. And Jonathan, who is the son of King Saul, stood and watched the whole event. It was very exciting to Jonathan to see this young man David, who was just a kid in the family, and who had simply come to report on how his older brothers (who were military officers) and how the army was doing against the Philistines. He had just come there on a mission from his father. He was just a little shepherd boy. And he looks out and sees the whole Israeli army trembling in fear before this giant Goliath.

**David and Goliath**

Well, Goliath was quite a person to face. I mean, it is kind of intimidating to see somebody who is ten feet tall, and who has weapons that you can't even lift, and armor that you couldn't imagine putting on yourself. And here's this little shepherd boy, and he says, "What's going on here? Who is this fruitcake out here who is intimidating all the people of God?" And David says, "Let me take him on. I think I know how to handle him."

When Saul is amazed that this boy would suggest such a thing (it was unthinkable), David makes his claim that God has burdened his heart with this. He knows what he's doing. Then he makes that marvelous statement that all of us need to make several times a day in our lives: "The battle is the Lord's."

So, Jonathan stood and listened to all this, and watched this marvelous display of confidence in God. Then finally, Saul says, "Go to it. And after they went through trying on the armor, David says, "Really, I can't do it this way. Let me do it the way I know how to do it." David headed out, and right down in front of him was a brook that ran between him and Goliath, the giants. David walked down to that brook, and that's where he knelt down, on his way into combat, and picked those five smooth, aerodynamically perfect stones. He then flung one (that was all it took) into the forehead of Goliath, and hit him in a vital spot, and knocked him unconscious. Then David rushed in; took a Goliath sword; and, with the effort to pick up that heavy weapon, took the head off the beast.

With that, all of Israel was encouraged. Battle courage suddenly flowed back into the minds of the Israeli soldiers, and they pounced upon the Philistines, and a great victory was one. Jonathan, on that day, said, "This is the kind of a guy I like. David is my kind of man." And immediately, there was a natural affinity. And it went the other way. David himself, standing in awe and respect of the king's son, had an immediate rapport with Jonathan. The two had a natural compatibility as friends.

Jonathan was present when David confronted Goliath. He saw the whole thing, and the soul of each man was drawn to the soul of the other. The Hebrew word here looks like this in the Hebrew language. It's the Greek word "ahav." The Hebrew word "ahav" is the same word as our Greek word "agape." I just show you that to indicate that the Old Testament had a distinct word that meant mental attitude beliefs (mental attitude love). Therefore, this is the same thing. When it says that there was a compatibility between them, this is what it's referring to. We have this in 1 Samuel 18:1: "And it came to pass, when he had ceased speaking unto Saul (that is, David), that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David. And Jonathan 'ahav' him (mental attitude loved him) as his own soul." This was not an emotional attachment. There was that in some degree. But first of all, I want you to make it clear the Bible says that there was a mental attitude compatibility; that is, the highest quality of love. I stress that to you because the homosexuals like to take the friendship of these two men, and use it as an example of homosexuality in order to defend their practice. But it's nothing of the sort. And the Hebrew language comes to our rescue to help us to understand what kind of attachment this was between these two.

The result of this event with Goliath was that a friendship pact was established between David and Jonathan. Verse 2: "And Saul took him that day (that is, David), and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul." This pact was sealed by Jonathan with gifts to David. Verse 4: "And Jonathan stripped himself of the world that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his belt."

Now immediately, David's pain spread. Obviously, when people heard what he had done, in terminating the giant, and giving Israel relief from the threat of the Philippians, David became a very famous man. In 1 Samuel 18:7-8, we read, "And the women spoke to one another as they played, and said, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,' And Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him, and he said, 'They have ascribed unto David ten thousands; and, to me the ascribed but thousands. And what can he have more but the kingdom?'"

Here is a problem. Jonathan and David are close friends. They have the highest esteem for one another. They have the kind of rapport of people who just meet each other and they click, as that happens sometimes. But, Saul, who begins to have a mental attitude hatred toward the one for whom Jonathan has the utmost mental attitude love. The hatred is because people are singing about the exploits of David, and they're saying, "King Saul kills his thousands (in his military exploits), but David kills tens of thousands." It was a way of exalting David. And Saul said, "He has the praise of the people. What else can he get, except my crown?"

So, David suddenly becomes a very serious threat to Saul, and it makes Saul jealous. And the result of this is that Saul decides that the way to handle this is to kill David. This was not always the case with Saul's attitude toward David. I would remind you that once you come to a mental attitude love, you should not assume that you're going to keep it. There was a time when that's exactly the attitude that Saul had toward David.

You will notice in 1 Samuel 16:21: "And David came to Saul and stood before him. And he (Saul) loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. Islamabad." And again, you have the same Hebrew word "ahav" (equivalent to the Greek word "agape"), meaning mental attitude love. Saul had the same attitude that his son Jonathan had toward David.

Verse 22 says, "And Saul went to Jesse, saying, 'Let David, I pray you, stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.' And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and prayed with his hand. So, Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Saul had an emotional problem, because he was gradually getting out of temporal fellowship. When you get out of temporal fellowship with God, you cannot be a normal human being. Until you are born again person, you cannot be a normal human being. Until you are in fellowship with God temporally, through confession of your known sins, you cannot be a normal human being. You will have all kinds of mental, and emotional, and volitional problems. And those will never be solved by going to someone for psychotherapy, because there's no one out in psychotherapy who knows anything about this solving of mental, emotional, and volitional problems. You can go there and spend your money, and you can psych yourself that something good has been done, but it's a con game. Only the Word of God can resolve matters of the soul.

So, as Paul drifted out of fellowship with God, he began having these emotional turmoils. And there were times when he had opened himself up to the influences of demonic spirits. And when this kind of influence came to a climax, the playing of the harp by David, who was an excellent musician, had a therapeutic, calming effect on Saul.

So, David was very important to Saul, not only is his armor bearer, and as a symbol of the conquering king associated with this man who had brought down Goliath, but he was of value to him because of the therapy that came from David's music. Mental attitude sins will always create havoc with mental attitude love.

So, Saul, when he's angry (now at David) because of the adulation of the people, goes from mental attitude love to mental attitude hatred toward David. 1 Samuel 18:9: "And Saul watched David enviously from that day and onward. And it came to pass on the next day that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of his house, and David played with his hand, as at other times. And there was a javelin at Saul's hand." Saul is again emotionally disrupted. He calls in David; David is playing; and, Saul is sitting there, glowering at David, raging with hatred within himself now. He is a totally abnormal human being now. He no longer controls his emotional structure. And there is a javelin close by.

So, Saul reaches over suddenly, and heaves the javelin at David: "And Saul cast the javelin, for he said, 'I will smite David even to the wall with it.' And David escaped from his presence twice." So, Saul decides to pin David through the wall. He throws the javelin. David is agile enough to duck, and he misses David: "And Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul." There's the whole picture. Why was Saul emotionally disrupted? Why does Saul need so-called "psychotherapy?" Because he was emotionally wacko because he was in sin. When you're in sin, you get off-beam. When you get back out of sin, you're on target. W

When I say these things, it is not just my personal opinion. You should know that the men who are the leaders – the most experienced in the forefront of psychotherapy, are the men who are saying that the system doesn't work. These are things that we have grasped out of the air. We now have 250 different systems for healing people's emotional, volitional, and mental problems – and none of them work. The only thing that works is people getting better on their own. So, we are talking about the people who are in the field, and who have experience, and realize that they're dealing with something that is not clicking. The reason for it is that they're trying to resolve a soul problem which only God can resolve.

Well, the friendship love between Jonathan and David comes up with a very serious test now because of Saul's attempt to kill David on two occasions. Saul himself had not kept a promise that he had made, that whoever killed the giant Goliath would receive his daughter in marriage. You can read about that in 1 Samuel 17:25, and compare 1 Samuel 18:19. Saul had reneged on His Word, and given this daughter, who was a very attractive lady, to someone else in marriage. And David could have been really put out with this. But because David was a man of mental attitude love, even being denied someone that he wanted to marry did not cause him to become bitter toward the king.

Well, when the king was confronted with this, he said, "I'll make it up to you. I have another girl, Michal. You may marry her." But the mind of Saul began spinning: "You can't marry her until you go out and kill 100 Philistines and bring me proof. So, in 1 Samuel 18:20-25, we have this devious plan put into motion by Saul because Saul thought, "He cannot come up against 100 combat soldiers and not get killed in the process. And I'll get rid of David in this way.

1 Samuel 18:20: "And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, 'I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hands of the Philistines may be against him.' Wherefore, Saul said to David, 'You shall this day be my son-in-law, and one of the two.' And Saul commanded his servants, saying, 'Speak with David secretly and say, 'Behold, the King has delight in you, and all his servants love you now. Therefore, be the king's son-in-law.'' And Saul's servant spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, 'Does it seem to you to be a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, seeing that I'm a poor man and lightly esteemed?'"

Saul here was egging David on to marry his daughter. He wanted David to say, "OK, I'll marry the girl." David, being a man of humility, which is characteristic of mental attitude love people, said, "Hey, who am I? I'm just an ordinary shepherd boy. I should marry a king's daughter? I should move into royalty?"

Verse 24: "And the servants of Saul told him, saying, 'David spoke on this manner.' And Saul said, 'Thus shall you say to David: the king does not desire any dowry, but a 100 foreskins of the Palestinians to be avenged of the king's enemies.' But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines."

So, this was the plan. And David went out and did what was required of him. In fact, David, because of the character that he had in the Word of God, did double than what he was required. Verse 26: "And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David to be the king's son-in-law. And the appointed days were not yet expired. Therefore, David arose and went, he and his men, and slew 200 men of the Philistines, and brought their foreskins, and they gave him in full number to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal, his daughter in marriage."

So, now here again, Saul had increasing ground for hating David, because he had outmaneuvered the plan to do him in. Saul was indignant toward David, basically, because he recognized in David a spiritual maturity and a stability, that came from David's mental attitude love that Saul could not find in himself.

Notice verse 28: "And Saul saw, and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michael, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David. And Saul became David's enemy continually." It was bad enough the hard feelings that Saul had toward David, but it really crushed Saul when he found that his daughter loved David. So, Saul was now the sworn enemy of David.

You have to get that picture to understand the response from David. You are not dealing with somebody who just has told you that they didn't like your Easer hat last week. You are dealing with somebody who has a bitter, deep hatred for you, and who wants to stop you in your tracks. They do not like what you're doing; they do not like what you're saying; they do not like what you stand for; and, they are out to scuttle your boat. And this is the situation that David faced.

Now what could we indeed expect from David in a case like this? Everybody would say, "Well, it would be understandable if he himself had some very hard feelings back. But that was not the case. In 1 Samuel 19:1, we read a command now from Saul to his son, Jonathan: "And Saul spoke to Jonathan, his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David." Now here's a fine kettle of fish. Here is Jonathan – the close, devoted friend of David. His father the king calls him in, and says, "I want you, with the servants, to figure out some way to kill David."

**Jonathan**

David and Jonathan are bosom buddies. Does Jonathan had a mental attitude capable of resisting this direction from the king himself? Mind you that Jonathan was no fool. He realize that if David lived, Jonathan would never sit upon the throne of Israel. Jonathan understood this. He understood that David was as much a threat to Jonathan as he was to Saul.

However, Jonathan talks sense to his father, and causes him to agree to restore David to the court. Jonathan was a peacemaker. People with mental attitude love do not go around stirring conflict among the people of God. They go around stirring good feelings between people who are at odds with one another, or who think they have cause of friction between them.

Notice in 1 Samuel 19:4: "Jonathan spoke good of David unto Saul, his father, and said to him, 'Do not let the king sin against his servant (against David), because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you. For he put his life in his hands, and he slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a grace salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and you rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?' And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, 'As the Lord lives, he shall not be slain.' And Jonathan called David. And Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul. And he was in his presence as in time past."

So, here's the restoration. This is what Christians should do for Christians who are at odds with one another. You have an entree; you clear the air; and, you bring restoration between them. And that's what Jonathan did between his father and David.

However, David's fame continues to increase. Things just will not quiet down about this super young man, David. Notice verse 8: "And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him." One of the great talents that God gave David was for military leadership. He was not only a good musician, but he was a good general in the field. Consequently, when David was in charge, fear and demoralization swept through the ranks of the enemies. And courage went through the ranks of the Jewish soldiers.

Verse 9: "And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand. And David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David, even to the wall with the javelin. But he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall. David fled, and escaped that night."

So, here you have a repeat of the same scene all over again – David escaping the hatred of Saul, because every time David serves Saul, in a way that obviously shows the hand of God upon Saul, it only makes Saul hate David the more. So, Saul goes back to his original plan – back to the assassins.

Beginning at verse 11, we read, "Saul also sent messengers unto David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, 'If you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow you shall be slain.' So, Michal let David down through a window, and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michael took an image and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair for its head, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, 'He's sick.' And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, 'Bring him to me in the bed that I may slay him.' And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed with a pillow goats hair for its head. And Saul said unto Michal, 'Why have you deceived me so, and sent away my enemy, that he is escaped?' And Michal answered Saul, 'He said unto me, 'Let me go. Why should I kill you?'"

Now, this is a tough father-in-law. Here's his father-in-law saying to his daughter, David's wife, "Why are you against me? Why didn't you help me kill your husband?" It's one of the all-time great examples of how crazy you can get without mental attitude love. Why should Saul even ask this girl why she would not cooperate with his assassination plot? And Michal cleverly deceived them by putting an image into the bed, and pretending that David couldn't come because he was too sick. So, Saul again is frustrated.

Now, in the meantime, Jonathan and David now have to keep their contacts with one another secret to avoid the hatred of Jonathan's father, Saul. Turn to 1 Samuel 20:11. These two friends, each of them filled with mental attitude love toward one another, pledge to each other their loyalty: "Jonathan said unto David, 'Come, and let us go out into the field.' And they went out, both of them, into the field where they could talk privately. And Jonathan said unto David, 'O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about tomorrow, anytime, or the third day, and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then don't send unto you, and show you, then the Lord do so much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will show it to you, and send me away, that you may in peace. And the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.'" Jonathan said, "I'm going to promise you, David, if my father will relent, I'll let you know that it's safe to come back. If he will not, you have my word that I will warn you.

Verse 14: "You shall not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not, but also you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever. No, not when the Lord has cut off the enemies of David everyone from the face of the earth." Jonathan has the perception to know that he will not reign upon the throne of Israel. In fact, he has begun to suspect that he's not even going to survive and live to see David on the throne. So, he says to David, "I will be loyal to you, and I will expect your loyalty to me, but not only to me, but after I'm gone, to my family – that you will take care of them.

Verse 16: "So, Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, 'Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.' And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him. For he loved him as he loved his own soul." This was a deep attachment of Jonathan, for David, and of David for Jonathan. This love was kind of love that a person has for himself: "as for his own soul." It is the kind of love that causes you to take immediate action to save your life when it is threatened. This is the kind of love that causes you to take every effort for your personal well-being, and to fulfill your survival needs. This is the kind of caretaker love that is characteristic of mental attitude love. And this is what Jonathan and David had for one another. It makes friends who are loyal to each other. It makes friends who will stick by each other, and stick up for each other.

So, it's not so hard to discover when you're short on mental attitude love – when your friends are in trouble, and you don't stand by them; or, when your friends have irked you, and you treat them with abuse.

Jonathan protected and defended David at the danger, in fact, of his very own life. In 1 Samuel 20:30, we read, "Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, 'You son of a perverse, rebellious women.'" And I would not, in mixed company, tell you what Saul really said in Hebrew. It is a regular word today, and it is an obscene curse. He wasn't just rebuking His Son. Saul was now so far over the edge in hatred, and jealousy, and bitterness, and all those things that rubout, mental attitude love, that he was using obscenities of the worst kind against his own son: "You son of a perverse, rebellious women. Don't I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and unto the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse (referring to David) lives upon the ground, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

"And Jonathan answered Saul, his father, and said unto him, 'Why should he be slain? What has he done?' And Saul cast the javelin at him to smite him, whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David." So, now you have Saul throwing javelins at his son, trying to kill him, because he will not go along with the father in the conspiracy to kill David.

"So, Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him such shame." So, the response here now, of this injustice (which also is characteristic of mental attitude sin) – the response was anger. That is the characteristic of mental attitude sin. Injustice brings on a justifiable anger. And Jonathan leaves the table in indignation, and in great anger over what his father had said, and what his father intended to do.

So, Jonathan proceeds, at the hazard of his own life now. He knows that his father would not hesitate to kill him. He already tried, and he missed. So, he knows that David's life is in his hands, as well as his own.

1 Samuel 20:35: "And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, 'Run now. Find the arrows which I shoot.' And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him." He wants to get the boy away from himself so that he can meet privately with David: "And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathon had shot, Jonathon cried after the lad and said, 'Is not the arrow beyond you?" He says to the boy, I think there are some arrows beyond you. Go farther, and check those out there: "And Jonathon cried after the lad: 'Make speed. Haste. Don't stay there.' And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad didn't know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter. What Jonathan was doing was sending the boy out there to come back to say, "Hey, someone is out here."

**David's Love for Jonathan**

"And Jonathan gave his weapons unto the lad, and said unto him, 'Go carry them into the city.'" So, he sends the boy away: "And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times. They kissed one another, and wept one with the other until David controlled himself." In the fashion of the countries of the Orient (the eastern / Middle Eastern countries), the kiss on the cheek was normally exchanged between men. And the two men now are in tears over what has happened between themselves and Saul.

"And Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for as much as we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord be between me and you, and between my seed and your seed forever.' And he arose and departed. And Jonathan went into the city." So, Jonathan now warns his friend that the worst possible conditions exist, and that there is no hope.

**Jonathan's Love for David**

In 1 Samuel 23:15, we have the record of the last meeting between these two mental-attitude friends, who stood by each other under the worst conditions: "And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life. And David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the forest. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David into the forest, and strengthened his hand in God." He encouraged him spiritually" "And he said unto him, 'Fear not, for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find you, and you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next sent unto you. And that also Saul, my father, knows.'"

Now what a statement this is – Jonathan says to David, "My father, Saul, is your enemy. Take courage. He will not be able to kill you. God will protect you. You will be the next king over Israel. And I, who should be in line for the kingdom, will be next to you. I will still be your friend. I will still have the great affection. I will still have the great mental attitude affection for you that I now have when you have taken what could have been mine."

This is a classic example of what mental attitude love is all about. I think that if you'll meditate on just this story between these two men, you'll get a feeling of what it is that the apostle Paul is calling upon all of us to do as Christians. This is what should characterize us. And more importantly, you'll be able to look around at your own experience, and see how often you have failed to treat people in just that way.

This is the last time that the two friends see each other. About six years later, David hears that Saul and his three sons have been killed in battle against the Philistines. You can read about that in 1 Samuel 3:2; 1 Samuel 6:8; and 2 Samuel 1:2-4. David's mental attitude love bore no grudge for Saul. As a matter of fact, he wrote a poem honoring Saul and mourning. You can read that poem in 2 Samuel 1:17-27.

When David did become king, his love for Jonathan continued. The grief over Jonathan's death in battle was very great. But David kept his promise to take care of Jonathan's family. And he expressed this by taking care of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. And you can read about that in 2 Samuel 9.

So, how came such love between friends? It begins with a mental attitude love that only God can place in the minds of a believer. It is part of what Galatians 5:22 calls the fruit of the Spirit. It is the capacity to have a spiritual maturity through the Word of God that enables that kind of love to develop within the soul of the believer.

In John 15:12-13, the Lord says, "This is My commandment: that you love ('agape') one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." This kind of love enables the utmost sacrificial provision on your part for the person who is the object of your love.

It is true that people for whom you have a mental attitude love, you will very often develop an emotional rapport with as well. You will develop the "phileo" type of emotional attachment to that person. There are other people that you don't really have an emotional attachment to, but you do have this mental, wellbeing attitude toward them. We are not making light of our emotional attachments to other people. Those are very important, and they are very dear. But the order has to begin up here in the head. If your love for someone in marriage begins with an emotional attachment, you're in big trouble. You should have a mental attitude love, so that you can say about the person: "That person not only loves me, but he's my friend." Have you ever heard someone say that? You might say, "That's kind of dumb, isn't it?" No, it's not dumb. They're telling you that they not only have an emotional attachment for this person, and that that person has an emotional attachment for them, but they also have a mental attitude quality of wellbeing.

People who are going around, slapping their wives around, are not those who have mental attitude love, but they are people who do have an emotional attachment to those same people that they're beating up. Do you see the difference? There is a very great difference. The expression of a friend with "agape" love capacity – the love will be expressed in the fact that they will be so loyal that they will not shrink from personal danger in protecting you. This will be a person who stands by you, and they will not be ashamed nor embarrassed by what you think. Even when what you think is wrong, they will hope you will do better, but they'll stand by you. This is a person who will give up his own ambitions in order to see you successful.

What's the big problem with marriage? Wives who have their own agenda for life, most of which is diametrically opposite to what the Bible teaches as the agenda for wives – to be a helper to the husband? "Oh no, I have my own career. I'm not here to be a helper to him." That is wrong? "Oh, I'm here to have my own source of income – not to be a helper to my husband, and depend on his income." You're quite wrong. You can do it that way. You're perfectly free to do it that way. That's the freedom that we Christians stand for. We Christians believe in a freedom to such an extent that we want you to be free to go to hell in your own way by your own choice; or, we want you to be free to go to heaven by God's way. We want you to have the freedom of making your choice of your eternal destiny. We want you to have the freedom to live your life any way you want to. And God gives you that. But He does not change the order of your best wellbeing. And those who have mental attitude love within a marriage relationship automatically move into the category, and into the role, that they're supposed to play – and the role in which God can then bless.

A person with mental attitude love will reach out because he's drawn to you, soul-to-soul. There's a camaraderie based upon a spiritual intimacy. Friendships with a warm glow of Christian fellowship will cool off when you tolerate mental attitude sins. When you start tolerating mental attitude sins, you'll start rationalizing and defending yourself as to why you're treating people the way you are – why you're not kindly disposed to people who have never done you any harm, but have done you a great deal of good.

It's the loss of mental attitude love that will impoverish you. That's always a sad sight, because this is what people lack toward Jesus Christ. The Jews did not have a mental attitude love toward Him. Therefore, they were willing to murder Him. And Jesus says, "They have opposed Me, and they have hated Me without a cause." And the Greek word there means "without a single thing that I did to them."

What do you do? Boy, you can get so bitter. We had some kids on the school bus this year, and they began picking on one other boy. He was kind of a modest, quiet little kid. And they said some terribly ugly things about him. And they put the kid into tears. So, the word got back to me. I called all the perpetrators in, and said, "This is what I understand you have said. Your language was not only ugly, but it was even vile. And I want to know, first of all, did you do it? And then I want you to confirm that so-and-so did it and so-and-so did it." They all agreed they did it, and that they were all guilty, and that everybody that was in there with me had been part of it. There was one kid who always resorts to tears. And he did it right then. He said, "I didn't do anything." I said to the other boys, "Was he part of this?" They said, "Yes, he was."

Now under those conditions, kids don't like, generally. They were so scared. People generally don't come in even to see me. I always am floating above them all. When they have to come in to see me, things are really serious. So, it's a little easier situation. And the other boys were the kind of kids that were really nice kids. They just got themselves off into a little fluky horsing-around that got out of hand. So, I said, "OK, you guys are now the silent trip. You are to be silent on your bus trips, and you will sit up in the front seats until I give you further notice. I was going to keep them quiet for a week.

What am I doing? I'm taking care of some very serious violations of righteous conduct on the part of other peoples' kids. And I'm taking the trouble to line up their lives with compatibility to the holiness of God. That seems to me to be a good thing. That seems to me to be a great kindness. But in comes storming a wife. And she brought her newly married husband with her. And right away, I knew that he was a certain type, because he came in wearing a baseball cap. And they sat down in the office, and he folded his hands. I do not to this day know whether he is capable of speaking. During that whole conversation, he uttered not one word. I was hoping that he might, at least, have coughed, so that I would have known that he was maybe getting rid of a demon inside of him or something. But there was nothing. I figured that he must have had an injury during the war, and now he couldn't talk.

Well, the gist of it was that this woman was really indignant that I was putting her kid on the silent trip. He had told her all about it, and that he wasn't guilty of picking on this boy, and saying these mean things, and saying these bad things. And I said, "Well, I should tell you that I have carefully gone over the people who were present, and the other children in the bus who were not involved. And they uniformly say that he was part of the conspirators and attackers."

"Well," she said, "I want you to know that he never lies to me." I said, "He has this time." She said, "Well, I just want you to know I'm taking him out of school." And what kind of a situation do we have now? What am I going to do with this lady? This woman has been with us for a couple of years. She's not just a nobody who's out of the blue, who doesn't know what Berean Christian Academy does for students, and what a super goldmine of child training this is. There is no place else in this city that does this in the same way.

Here's a case where it's strains your mental attitude love. But I had to pity her, that her child was going to be denied because he was one of those kids who entered into everything in every class. His teachers said, "He's always responding, but he always goes to tears when you catch him with his hand in the cookie jar, and he is quick to declare his innocence."

So, the mother rewarded my efforts in behalf of straightening out her son by pulling him out of our school. So, what was my response? There were several thoughts I had in mind at the time, like, "Hang it on your nose, lady," or several other things. But instead I said, "Well, I'm sorry to hear that, but you will have to check in with our ladies in the office to go through the procedure. Let me see if they're still here." This was at the end of school. And I just walked out, and the ladies were gone. And I said, "No, they're already gone. If you come in tomorrow morning, they can help check you out."

That was it. I don't have any bitterness toward her, but I do pity her, and I'm sorry for the boy. But it was one of those examples that we come up against all the time in Christian work – of being rewarded for good things we do for people, by being treated as the enemy.

This is what Saul was doing to the best friend he probably ever had in Jonathan. Because of Saul's lack of divine viewpoint love, he hated the one person he should have loved above all else. Had he loved David, the Bible indicates that, somehow, God would have retained the royal prerogative for the house of Saul. I don't know how that would have been, but it made it clear that had Saul acted with divine viewpoint mental attitude love, he would not have been removed. David had to be king, because he was in the right line of Judah. Saul was in the wrong line. He was out of the tribe of Benjamin. But Saul was the product of the people demanding a king. But God was going to honor him in some way, and his family line.

So, the person who has mental attitude love will treat you with the respect you deserve, and will be loyal to you. And that loyalty means that, when rapport emotionally comes in, their mental attitude love will keep the emotional attraction from going out of line, in treating you in a way that you shouldn't be treated. It will keep you from your taking your emotions, and using them to abuse the object of your emotions. That's another thing about mental attitude love. Jonathan and David were two men with mental attitude love, and it was well within the bounds of godly propriety.

It is our God who takes everything into account in everything that we do. The safe way to move through life is to take the stand on nurturing mental attitude love within our souls so that we have a basis for operating with a kind of rationality that God respects, and that God will bless.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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