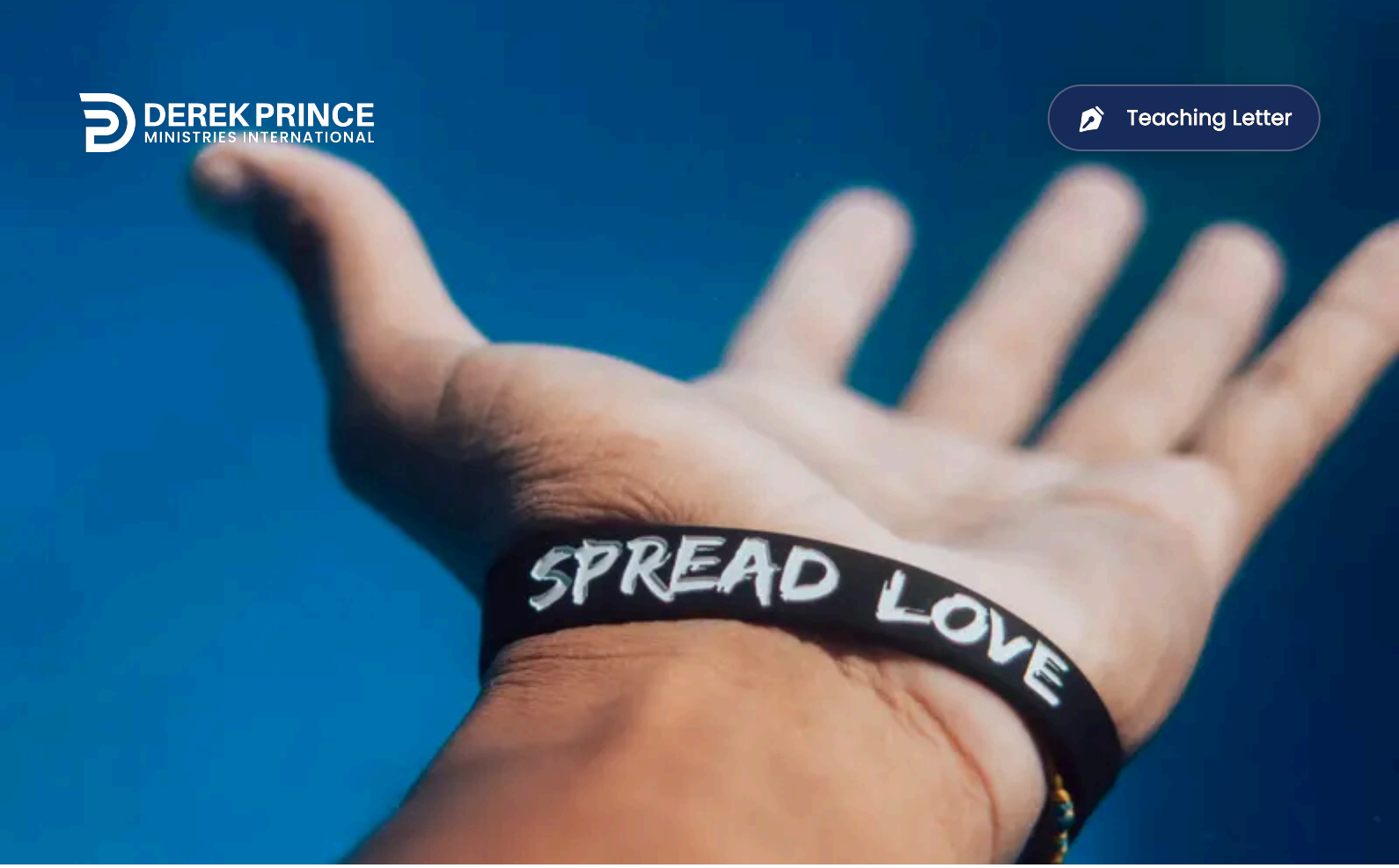


Commanded To Love



Teaching Letter
By Derek Prince

In a world where there is so much suffering and division how are we to live out Jesus' command 'to love one another'? - In this powerful biblical reflection Derek Prince shows how to do this by pointing us to Jesus' example and how He loved.

In John 13 vs. 34–35 it says:

> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, thatyou also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

This love is not a choice. It's a commandment. Jesus said it's a new commandment.

The Jewish people were used to the Ten Commandments of Moses. In a certain sense you could call this maybe the eleventh commandment and I believe it comprehends all the Ten Commandments.

How are we to love one another?

The same way that Jesus loved us. That is an unselfish, self-giving, seeking first the good of others. Jesus said if you will have that kind of love the whole world will sit up and take notice, because they don't see it anywhere. What they see is selfishness, self-seeking, grabbing. You can revolutionize a whole situation by demonstrating the love of God.

If you were to ask most people today what their impression of the Christian church is they would not speak in terms of love. That isn't the way the world sees us. There are wonderful and glorious exceptions, but basically they see us a religious people. People who follow a set of rules.

So we have two options. We can either love one another the way Jesus love us and be obedient, or we can fail to love one another and be disobedient. Jesus never used idle words. He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another." It can be done.

I'm not a historian by any means but I do know that in the Roman Empire, which was one of the most powerful that history has ever recorded, the unbelievers said about the

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Christians, "See how these Christians love one another." That was their impression. And it won.

Within three centuries the most powerful empire on earth at that time had capitulated to the claims of Jesus, a Jewish Carpenter who had perished on a Roman gibbet. They couldn't explain it. They couldn't understand it. People from diverse backgrounds, different races and social levels loved one another. They paved the way for a new way of life that impacted the whole Roman world.

This kind of love is really not an emotion. It's a decision. I want to turn you to the first verse of Psalm 18. These are the words of David:

> "I will love You, O LORD, my strength."

David made a decision. Have you ever made that decision? Have you ever really decided I will love the Lord with all that's in me?

Now David made it a personal decision. But in 1 John chapter 4 we're confronted by a corporate decision which takes us even further:

> "Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7)

You see that's a corporate decision. Let us love one another. The final test is not assent to a doctrine, it's love.

Everyone who loves is born of God. You cannot have that kind of love unless you are born of God. But if you are born of God the evidence should be that kind of love.

The perfect example of that is Jesus. They did everything to Him. They beat Him, they pierced His hands and His feet, they put a crown of thorns on His head, they gave Him vinegar to drink, they abused Him, they reviled Him, but one thing they could not do was what?

They could not stop Him loving. He loved them to the end. You see, if you love with that kind of love nobody can stop you. You are the only really free person on earth because nobody can stop you doing what you want to do.

That's what I believe God is waiting for—it's that we love one another with His divine love.

We can talk as much as we like about faith and righteousness, but if we do nothing for the people who really need us we're just using empty words. And there's no shortage of people who need us.

I've always been amazed at Paul's prayer in Philippians chapter 3:

> "That I may know Him, Jesus, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings."

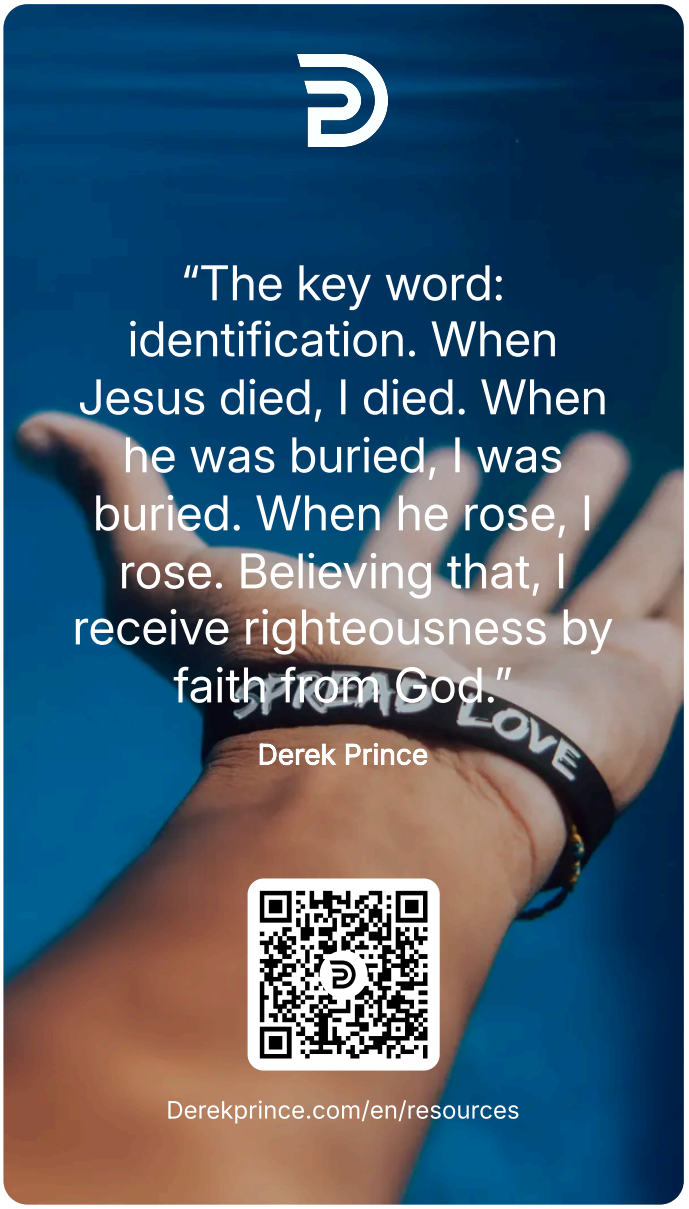
I've come to see that some things only come by suffering.

Suffering does something that nothing else will do. And then I remember when I was in the military in the army I was what they call in the British Army a medical orderly. I learned by my association with my British soldiers that people who've passed through a real hard, dangerous time together, they've been under fire, they've been in the trenches, they've been wherever—they are bonded together in a way that other people are not bonded.

They may be very different in their personality, their social level, many other things, but having been through it together bonds people. And I think Jesus wants to be bonded with us, and when we go through it together with Him we have a bond with Him that cannot be broken. So I'm not welcoming suffering, but I'm prepared for it. I realize there are some things God cannot do in me without suffering.

How about you? Would you like to make a commitment? It's a scriptural commitment. Will you say in the words of Paul, "That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering." You'll come closer to the Lord than you've ever been. And that's what God wants. I want to offer you the privilege of making the following statement quietly.

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