



PLAIN AND SIMPLE SERIES

The
Key

HOW TO LET GO AND LET GOD

NANCY
MISSLER



The Key

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Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
Introduction.....	5
1. My Story	9
2. How Do We Give Things to God?.....	29
3. Recognize, Acknowledge and Experience..	53
4. Confess, Repent and Forgive	73
5. Give All to God.....	89
6. Read God's Word	101
7. Conclusion	111
Survival Kit Prayer	119

Introduction

What would you say has affected your life more than anything else as a Christian? What has made the greatest impact on your walk with the Lord?

There are probably hundreds of individual answers to this question but, for me, after being a Christian for over 43 years, the thing that has changed my life more than anything else is knowing *how* to give things over to God and being able to leave them there. Knowing how to surrender my “self” to Him so that He can love His Love through me, affects every choice that I make. This simple discovery has impacted my life more than anything else, because it’s really the “key” to a successful Christian walk and the key to the abundant Life!

Most of us, as believers, understand that we have God’s Love (or His Life) in our hearts. But how many of us, in all honesty, really experience that Love of God in our everyday lives—in our marriages, in our relationships and in our workplace? We all talk about experiencing His Love, we write about it and we sing about it, but how many of us are really living an abundant love-filled life?

There’s a huge difference between simply knowing that we possess God’s Love in our hearts and *actually experiencing that Love in our lives*. The key to doing this is understanding how to relinquish ourselves over to the Lord (becoming open and cleansed vessels), so that His Love from our hearts can continue to flow.

Exactly *how* we do this is what this little book is all about...

Matthew 24

One of the most provocative verses in Scripture is Matthew 24:12, which tells us that in the end times (just before Christ returns), one of the things that will be very apparent is that the “love of many will grow cold.”

Now, the interesting thing about this verse is that the Greek word for “love” here is *Agape* which means God’s supernatural Love. Therefore, this passage is referring to Christians—people who have God’s Love in their hearts. It’s saying that in the end times something is going to happen to that Love of God in Christians’ hearts that will cause it to grow cold, become quenched or blocked.

I remember when I first read this passage 20 years ago, it shocked me that Matthew could possibly be referring to God’s Love. Human love I could understand, but God’s Love astounded me. However, in the ensuing years since I’ve understood this verse, this is exactly what I’ve seen occurring in the Christian world—the disintegration of relationships. And, this is one of the reasons why so many Christian marriages, relationships and church bodies are having so much trouble. Something has happened to God’s Love in our hearts that has made it grow cold in our lives.

My Example

I understand this personally, because I was one of those Matthew 24:12 statistics for the first 20 years of my marriage. I had God's Love in my heart (I had been a believer for over 20 years), but His Love had certainly grown cold in my life.

May I emphasize something here that's very important: the concepts in this book are *not* just for married people! Wherever there is a relationship, you need God's way of Love. I simply learned these concepts through difficult times in my marriage.

My first little book *Why Should I Be the First to Change?* tells the complete story of our failed 20-year Christian marriage and how God miraculously turned it around and healed it by His *Agape* Love. It's ironic, however, because all through those first troubled years, I thought I was operating on God's Love. After all, I had been a Christian for over 20 years, so naturally I assumed I had God's Love automatically flowing from my life! The truth was, I didn't even know the meaning of the word *Agape*, because I was loving my Chuck hoping to get in return the love that I so desperately needed and that's not God's Love at all, but *self-centered, natural, human love!*

I think many Christians today are doing the exact same thing: not only confusing God's Love with their own human love, just as I did, but also looking in all the wrong places to have their needs for love met, just as I was. They are trying to find the love and security they need in their spouses, their children

and their families. In other words, they are looking horizontally to have their needs for love met, not vertically to God alone as they should be.

This is why so many Christians today are getting discouraged, off-track and ready to give up because their lives and their relationships are just not working. And, that's exactly what happened to me!

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth [hangs on to] his life shall lose it; and he that hateth [lays down] his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” (John 12:24-25)

But, the question is: **HOW** do we do this on a practical day-to-day basis?

Chapter One

My Story

I'd like to begin this little book by sharing a portion of my own story with you, so that you can see the *key* in my own life that changed everything. Again, the concepts in the rest of this book (Chapter Two - Chapter Seven) are *not* just about husbands/wives, but are intended to help *all* relationships! This first chapter is simply an overview of my own story.

Back in 1975, when the crisis in our marriage came to a head, we had been married for about 20 years. God had given us four beautiful children, Chip, Mark, Lisa and Michelle. At that particular time, Chuck was the C.E.O. of a large electronics firm just outside of San Francisco and we lived in a beautiful, sprawling, three-acre ranch house with a pool, stables and guest quarters. We drove fancy cars, traveled extensively and enjoyed a life of affluence.

Anyone who might have seen us at that time, might have thought, "Wow, the perfect Christian family." Truly, from the *outside* it looked like we possessed everything anyone could ever want. But, if they could have seen us on the *inside* they would have seen six very empty, unhappy and loveless Christians. Chuck and I were like so many Christian couples you see today who are just existing together—simply passing in halls—certainly not experiencing abundant, love-filled lives as the Bible promises.

Our marriage was what you might call a “professional” marriage—a marriage where two people are living together strictly for the purpose of show, security or convenience. Again, the little book *Why Should I be the First to Change?* relates *all* the details of our marriage problems, how they began and what God did, but, for our purpose here, let me just give you a quick synopsis.

Our marital problems seemed to stem from primarily four areas:

First, my Chuck was (and still is) the typical Type A workaholic. Back then, he worked seven days a week, twelve-hour days and traveled on the average of two weeks out of every month. When he was home, he always had mountains of paperwork to do, phone calls to make or computer work to complete. He was always preoccupied.

Next, because Chuck was an absentee dad, we had many problems with our children. During the worst part of our marital problems, our boys were teenagers and, of course, there are many unhealthy avenues out there for lonely and unhappy 14-to 15-year-olds. On top of this, our youngest daughter, Michelle, was extremely ill and often in the hospital. She needed her dad just as much as the boys did, and the resulting emptiness formed deep emotional scars. My Lisa was only six at the time and quietly endured the hostility around her, but inside she, too, was deeply wounded.

In addition to the above problems, in later years we encountered huge financial reversals. We went from

being millionaires with the ability to buy anything and everything to total bankruptcy—corporate and personal. Many marriages never recover from the trauma that this brings.

Finally, the problem that seemed to compound all the others was that we continually moved. In our first 20 years of marriage, we moved 15 times. We never stayed in one place more than three or four years. Moving when your children are small is traumatic enough, but moving when your kids are teenagers is absolutely deadly. Relocating so often created innumerable problems for us.

Not only did all the above circumstances create gigantic tensions between Chuck and I, but each of us had our own way of dealing with these things, which caused even more stress and strain on our marriage. Chuck naturally *vented* all his feelings; I *pushed them down* and stored them for future use.

Both of us were locked in our own private worlds of tension and strife and trauma, and on our own would *never* have moved towards the other. We had come to a total deadlock and both of us were miserable, with little communication between us and certainly no love. We were simply *existing* together, as I see so many others doing today, certainly not experiencing the abundant Christian life as we were supposed to!

God's Love

As my feelings of frustration, resentment and bitterness over the above circumstances became

unbearable, I would go to the Lord and say, “Where is the abundant Life that I’m supposed to have as a Christian? If You are the answer, then why am I so miserable? *Where is the Love You talk about in Your Word and how on earth do I really experience it?*”

Maybe some of you reading this can relate.

What I didn’t understand at that time was that *Agape is not a human emotion or human feeling, but God Himself loving through us.* 1 John 4:8 tells us that “God is Agape.” Therefore, God is the One doing the loving, not us. And all He desires from us is the willingness to set our “selves” aside, so that He can love His Love through us.

Now, when I say “set ourselves aside,” it’s important you understand exactly what I mean. I do not mean setting aside who we really are and becoming some sort of a mindless robot. I mean simply learning to set aside all our thoughts, emotions and desires that are contrary to God’s will and becoming a cleansed and open vessel. God’s Life in our hearts will then be freed to come forth and fill our souls.

“Self” can be defined as all of our own thoughts, emotions and desires that are not of faith or that quench God’s Spirit in us. For example, anger, guilt, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, criticalness, doubt, pride, fear and so forth are the things that come from our *self* or our *flesh*.

Thus, all God desired from me at that time was the *willingness* to first yield and surrender my

self to Him, so *He could then freely love His Love through me*. In other words, God's Love does *not* automatically flow through us just because we are believers. All of the things that we choose to hold on to—our hurts, anger, frustration, doubt, fear, unbelief, unforgiveness, etc. (even if they are “justified” by the world's standards), block God's Love in our hearts and cause it to grow cold in our lives.

There's a very provocative Scripture in Psalm 119:70 which talks about our hearts becoming “fat as grease.” I can almost visualize a layer of kitchen grease covering my heart when I choose to hold on to or entertain any negative thoughts or emotions.

The lesson here is very simple: in order to experience God's Love freely flowing from our hearts out into our lives, we must be open and cleansed vessels.

My Own Marriage

This was the problem in my own marriage. I wasn't a clean and open vessel. I didn't know how to be. I didn't know the first thing about giving my *self* over to God; therefore, His Love in my heart had become “covered over with grease” just as Psalm 119:70 says, and had “grown cold in my life.”

I can remember one particular occasion when I was so overwhelmed by my feelings of despair that I locked myself in a darkened room of that huge, sprawling ranch house in Woodside, California, laid on the floor and cried uncontrollably until I thought I would die from the emotional pain. Because I

didn't know how to give my self—all my hurts, pain and confusion—over to God, after three hours of uncontrollable crying, I pushed all my emotions down deep, locked them up tightly, forced a smile on my face and came out to begin all over again.

I thought that by burying my real feelings and emotions and putting on a smile, I'd get rid of them and no one would know the difference.

How many of you do the same thing?

The truth is that when we bury our real thoughts and emotions, we don't get rid of them. We just program them in deeper, and then *they* can become the motivation for many of our future actions.

Now the world functions this way because the world *has no other choice—no other option*. Without Jesus in our lives to literally take away our hurts, fears, insecurities, unforgiveness, etc., we're *all* walking "time bombs," ready to explode! Read the newspapers today, watch T.V., look at the people on the street, the kids in school. This explosive attitude is prevalent.

Naturally we all respond to hurt and pain in one of two ways: we either vent our anger and our frustration or we push our hurts, bitterness and unforgiveness down and bury it. However, if we have Jesus in our hearts, there is a third option: if we can simply recognize and acknowledge our true thoughts and emotions and learn how to literally give these things over to God (rather than venting them or burying them), then He promises to remove them and

to fill us with His Love. Psalm 103:12 validates this: “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

Thus, our only responsibility, as believers, is to *recognize and acknowledge the negative things in our lives that are not of faith*, and that will block God’s Love in our heart, and *learn how to give them over to Him*. Then, God can freely love His Love through us, and not only will we have His Love for others, but we’ll also experience His Love for ourselves.

A Hopeless Situation

But, of course, I didn’t know all these things back then, and so without God intervening and doing something radical in our marriage, it was a pretty hopeless situation.

Our lives just seemed to crescendo to an inevitable explosion. We began to talk of separation and divorce, because we couldn’t see any other way out of the pain we were both experiencing, except to escape and run. This is why I can identify with so many Christians today as I see them preparing to do the same thing.

I felt like I had tried every way I knew to save our marriage. I had read every book on marriage that I could get my hands on; I went to marriage counselors; marriage seminars; I tried the *way of submission* (which, by the way, I absolutely hated); and I tried crying fits. None of these things ever worked, however, because they were simply temporary “outside” fixes. They were like bandages—only covering the outside

but never touching or exposing the debris *inside* that was the *real cause* of our marriage problems. In other words, none of these solutions ever removed the *grease* that covered my heart and made God's Love grow cold in my life.

Finally, things became so bad between us that I came to the point of leaving Chuck. Through a series of circumstances (again, all related in the little book, *Why Should I be the First to Change?*), God began to show me that He had a "*more excellent way*"—*His way of Love*—for me to learn and that I was totally missing it.

God showed me that *yes*, some of the things that Chuck was doing were wrong and that some of his priorities were off, and that *yes*, He would address these in His timing and in His way. But He also showed me that the way I was responding to Chuck's sin was also wrong (and quenching His Love in me), and this is what He wanted to address in me right then.

God made it clear to me that if I would just trust Him enough (by faith, not feelings) to give my "self" over to Him and become that cleansed vessel, He would then show me how to initiate His real Love to Chuck.

Why Should I be the First to Change?

Now, of course, my response was, "Are you kidding? *Why should I be the first to change?* (the name of my first book) Chuck is the one not paying

attention to You. If he will change, then I'd be glad to follow suit."

How many of us say this!

God's answer to me is one I will never forget. He simply said, "Nancy, the reason you need to be the first to change is because *your life depends upon it.*" In other words, my life depended upon my own willingness to change first.

I recently received a wonderful letter from a guy whose marriage was on the brink of divorce just a few months ago, but because he is learning, on a moment-by-moment basis, to give himself totally over to God, God has begun to restore his marriage. Listen to some of this gentleman's provocative statements:

My first love isn't my wife, it's Jesus Christ. Nothing else matters. Nothing. Only Jesus Christ. He is to be my first love. And in that one relationship being made right, EVERYTHING, capital E, falls into place, as HE sees fit. That is why we, as men, must obey Him. *That is why we must be the first to change.* It has nothing to do with being the "first" to change, or the "second," it has everything to do with initiating the PROPER order of our life. And that order is first and foremost: our single-minded love, single-minded faith, and single-minded obedience in Jesus Christ. Too radical, you might say, too extreme. YES, that is precisely the point."

The basic goal and purpose of all our lives as Christians is *to be conformed into the image of Christ*

(i.e., to let Christ's Love shine forth through us). Therefore, it doesn't matter who is the *first* to begin that transformation, as the gentleman above reiterated, because God desires us *all* to be transformed.

So, I finally said to the Lord, "I don't understand what more you want from me. I feel like I've already tried all the ways I can think of to save my marriage and none of them have ever worked. But next to You, Lord, my relationship with Chuck is the most important thing in my life and so, I'll do anything to save it. Therefore, do whatever You need to in my life to make me like You." In other words, I simply became willing for God to change me first.

And that's all God wanted from me: to be willing to give my *self* over to Him—to surrender all my thoughts, emotions and desires that are not Him and not of faith. This "yieldedness" is the KEY to the Christian walk because it affects every choice we make. God has all the *Love* we need, all the *Wisdom* we need and all the *Power* we need. All He needs from us is the *willingness* to set ourselves aside so that He can implement these things through us.

This outflowing of God's Life, however, does not happen automatically! God will never violate our free will. In other words, all Christians have God's Love in their hearts because Jesus is in their hearts, but *not* all Christians are willing to set themselves aside to let His Love flow! And that's the bottom line.

Learning to personally give my self over to God—becoming an open and cleansed vessel—became the turning point in my marriage, because I

finally became willing for God to show me all that He needed to do IN ME to accomplish this. I had previously believed that in God's sight, I was pretty "clean." Not true!

God obviously knew better and He lovingly began to show me all the things in me that He wanted to deal with. I could not believe all the things He found: self-pity, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, unforgiveness, anger, resentment, bitterness and the list goes on and on. These were things that I had buried and stored for years in the hidden part of my soul, never realizing they blocked His Love in my heart, causing it to grow cold in my life.

Now, by worldly standards, some of these things might have been "justified." But, by God's standards, because I mulled them over and entertained them rather than giving them to Him, they became sin in me and quenched His Love in my heart. Thus, rather than operate on God's Love as I so desperately wanted to, it forced me to operate totally on human love.

God's Love vs. Human Love

Speaking of human love and God's Love, let me emphasize that these two types of love are totally opposite, and getting them confused is one of the reasons why the Christian body is having such a hard time. There are four major differences between the two. Let's briefly review them, so from now on you'll be able to spot which is which. (My book *The Way of Agape* covers all of this in much greater detail.)

Here are the four major characteristics of God's Love and human love:

God's Love is unconditional because it's based upon God, who is always reliable and trustworthy and always has Love for that other person, even when we don't; whereas, human love is conditional because it is based upon us: how we *feel*, what our *circumstances* are and how the other person *responds* to us.

God's Love is one-sided because it doesn't have to be returned in order to be kept alive. In other words, it says, "I'll love you no matter what you do"; whereas, human love is a two-sided love because it always must be returned in order to be kept alive. It says, "If you stop loving me, I'll stop loving you."

God's Love is a freeing love because it frees the lover from expectations and presumptions and allows the one being loved to respond from his heart, not his defenses; whereas, human love is a bondage love because it puts the one loving in bondage to his expectations, and forces the one being loved to respond from his defenses, not his heart.

And finally, God's Love is an other-centered Love because it always puts the *other's* interests above its own; whereas human love is a self-centered love because it puts its *own* interests above the interests of others.

C.S. Lewis cuts through everything and gives us a very simple definition of the two loves: God's Love is a "*gift of Love*." Whereas, human love is a "*need love*."

Illustration

I recently heard a wonderful story that graphically illustrates the difference between these two types of love.

Irene was a young woman struggling in her marriage. She, like me, had tried everything she could think of to make her marriage work, but nothing had helped. Nothing had changed.

One afternoon as she was in her bedroom crying out to God, He answered her in the way only He can and told her to “go get a thimble.” “A thimble?” She thought she must have misunderstood Him. “A thimble,” He responded by the Spirit, “and go fill it with water.”

She knew it was God’s voice, so she promptly obeyed. Once she found her thimble and filled it with water, God told her to “Go to the beach.” She took her thimble full of water, walked two blocks to the beach and sat down on a rock overlooking the surf.

As she sat there contemplating why on earth God would bring her here, God again whispered, “Look at the water in your thimble. That’s your love. That’s human love. Now look out there at the vast ocean. *That’s My Love.* Don’t you think I have enough Love to give you so you can love your husband? *You just need to be an open vessel so I can pour it through you.*”

Remember this story whenever you doubt you have enough love for someone. God always has

enough Love for that other person, even when you don't. All He asks of you is to be clean and willing, so He can pour His Love for them through you.

Something else that's important to point out here is that God's Love in the Old Testament had two sides to it. It was not only a *long-suffering Love*, but also a *discipline Love*. Therefore, in those particular situations where "tough love" is needed, God will teach us *how* to love wisely. In other words, we don't need to conjure up our *own* guidelines or our *own* restrictions; the Holy Spirit will do that for us. He is the One loving. Thus, He will not only choose the way we are to love, but also the type of love we will need. All we must be is a cleansed vessel, so that He can implement and do these things through us.

The Real Problem

Thus, the real problem in my marriage was with me, not Chuck! Matthew 7: 3 & 5 says it so appropriately: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considereth not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Consequently, nothing in the world could have genuinely saved or fixed our marriage at that time, until I learned *how to become a cleansed vessel so God's real Love from my heart could flow out into my life.*

What exactly does it mean *to become an open and cleansed vessel*? What is the practical application of

doing this daily? We talk about giving things to God, but most of the time we end up taking those things back three minutes later. How do we really give things to God and leave them there? That's what this little book is all about.

Inner Court Ritual

In the Old Testament, there was a ceremony that the priests of Solomon's Temple went through in the Inner Court in order to deal with their sin and be reconciled with God. These, I believe, are the four steps that God has laid out for us in Scripture to help us deal with our sin and self and be reconciled to God. Over the next few chapters, these will be the steps we will be exploring.

Learning to implement these steps in my life is what eventually saved my marriage; helped me survive the sudden and unexpected death of our first-born son; the aftermath of a 6.8 earthquake under our home; the trauma of personal and corporate bankruptcy and the loss of our home, cars and insurance; the betrayal of many of our Christian friends; the loss of our reputation; and, all the other day-to-day events in between.

Going through these cleansing steps every time I am confronted with a hurtful remark, a painful situation, pride, fear, doubt, anxiety, bitterness, resentment (whatever is not of faith or whatever blocks His Love in my heart), is the only way I can stay an open vessel so that God's Love can flow from my heart out into my life.

This is the KEY to the Christian walk and the key to the abundant Life.

True Meaning of Loving God

Daily, moment by moment, implementing the Inner Court ritual—the four cleansing steps—is exactly what it means *to love God*. In Scripture, the Greek verb *agapao* (to love) means “what we totally give ourselves over to”—what we relinquish ourselves to or what we commit ourselves to. Thus, to love God the way He desires is not an emotion or a feeling, but simply, moment by moment, totally giving ourselves over to Him (becoming a cleansed and open vessel), so that *His Love from our hearts can come forth out into our lives*.

“Thou shalt love [*agapao*] the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38)

Consequently, as God began to show me *how* to love Him and *how* to become a cleansed vessel, He began to do incredible things in my life and my marriage began to drastically change and heal. Of all the things He did, however, there are two special situations that seem to stand out:

First, the more I learned how to love God and how to give my self over to Him, the more He began to literally remove my hurts, bitterness, unforgiveness, resentment, anger, etc. So much so, that when I would sit down and try to remember what I had given Him, I could not. God actually had taken these things

away from me “as far as the east is from the west,” just as He promises to do in Psalm 103:12.

Secondly, as God began to give me *His* supernatural (unconditional, one-sided, freeing, other-centered) Love for Chuck, it enabled me to love him right where he was. In other words, love Chuck in spite of what he was doing—love the “whole package”!

Now, when I say “loving in spite of what he was doing,” I’m talking about, first of all, a normal husband and wife relationship; and secondly, I’m *not* talking about being a *doormat*. So many spouses are petrified of being taken advantage of, of being stepped on or walked all over. And, I understand exactly how they feel, because this is what I experienced when I tried the way of submission.

The reason this occurs is because we are submitting to our spouses out of our hurts, our bitterness and resentment, and in our own strength (without being cleansed and without God’s Love in the picture). Thus, we will feel exactly like a *doormat*! On the other hand, if we can *first* choose to give ourselves over to God (and love Him), and then submit to that other person out of God’s Love, we’ll feel more like a *powerhouse*, because we know it’s not “us” doing the loving, but God through us.

Picture a Triangle

Think of God’s way of Love like a triangle. God is at the top of the triangle. We are on the bottom left corner and that other person we are trying to love is

on the bottom right. When we totally give ourselves over to God and love Him as He desires (i.e., become that open and cleansed vessel), God, then, can love His (merciful or strict) *Agape* Love through us to that other person. And, prayerfully, that other person will eventually return the love.

Again, God's way of Love, the more excellent way, is not just for married people, *it's for all of us! Wherever there is a relationship, we need God's Way of Agape* (with our kids, our bosses, our in-laws, our friends, even with our enemies, as Luke 6 tells us).

Loved Once Again

As I learned how to love God (how to moment-by-moment totally give myself over to Him), Chuck began to feel God's unconditional Love through me and he responded by returning all the human love that I was so desperate for in the first place.

In other words, once *Agape* becomes the foundation of our relationships (the glue, so to speak), then all the natural, human loves that have died in that relationship will have a basis upon which they can be restored and rebuilt. Thus, we don't throw out the human loves when we learn to love with God's Love, we simply must make sure that they are built on the solid foundation of God's Love.

Several times in the past few years, as Chuck and I travel all over the world and teach, people will notice how affectionate we are to each other and they will comment, "Oh, you must be newlyweds." When we answer, "No, actually we've been married for

over 40 years,” their mouths drop open and they are absolutely dumbfounded. The underlying thought is, “*How can you be married for 40 years and still be in love?*” Well, the answer is, with Agape as the foundation you can!

There are volumes of examples of how God’s Love began in our lives and how it continues to work, as we stay open and cleansed vessels. All of my books are full of them. God’s Love has not only saved our marriage, it’s the glue that continually reconciles and maintains our marriage daily. I know without a doubt that if it hadn’t been for God intervening in our lives 20 years ago and showing us *how to love Him and how to love each other with His Love*, we would not be together today. God’s Love has not only salvaged our marriage, it has turned it around to where it’s a hundred times better, deeper, sweeter and even more passionate than it ever was, even in the very beginning.

Talk about HOPE FOR MARRIAGES, HOPE FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND HOPE FOR FAMILIES! God’s way of Love truly is the answer! In order for His way of Love to work, however, we must *first* learn HOW to give ourselves over to Him on a moment-by-moment basis. This is the KEY to the whole Christian walk, because then, and only then, will we be able to experience His Love, not only for others but also for ourselves. And that’s what this little book is all about!

“Thou shalt love [*agapao*] the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And

the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love [*agapao*] thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

“There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:31)