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*<sup>[11]</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; <sup>[12]</sup> and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all, just as we also do for you; <sup>[13]</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.*

[1 Thessalonians 3:11-13]

As we begin the Thought for Today, I ask you to please carefully read 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 once more. Then answer me this question, "Why does 'the Lord' want you to both 'increase and abound in love for' not only 'one another,' but also 'for ALL people'?"

I hope you found the answer to my question in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 were you read,  
*so that He may ESTABLISH your HEARTS BLAMELESS IN HOLINESS before (your) God and Father AT THE COMING OF (your) LORD Jesus with all His saints.*

I hope you saw that it was not just for life in this world that you should want your *heart* to be *established* as being "blameless in holiness" before your God and Father. The reason is much greater! It is so that your *heart* may be found to be "blameless in holiness... at the COMING of (your) Lord Jesus"!

Do you remember where the love chapter is located in Scripture? It is found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. Take a few minutes to lay this aside, and turn there and read it again to refresh your memory.

Done? Good! Now consider the first three verses in 1 Corinthians 13 where you learn that if you:

*"speak with the tongues of humans or angels, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, (you) are no more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" [1 Corinthians 13:1]!*

*"And if (you) have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if (you) have all faith, so as to remove mountains, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, (you) are nothing" [1 Corinthians 13:2]!*

*"And if (you) give all (your) possessions to feed the poor, and if (you) deliver (your) body to be burned, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, it profits (you) nothing" [1 Corinthians 13:1:3]!*

Now let us review 1 Corinthians 13 4-8b one more time. I want to do this to enumerate all of the things God says love is to be. Listen to what it means to be truly established in love. You are to be established in:

*'patience', 'kindness', 'not being jealous', 'not bragging arrogantly', 'always acting the right way', 'not seeking its own desires', 'not being provoked', 'not keeping a list of wrongs done against it', 'not rejoicing in unrighteousness', 'rejoicing with the truth', 'bearing all things', 'believing all things', 'hoping all things', 'enduring all things'; 'never failing in love'!*

I do not know about you, but to me that is a daunting list to live up to. I know that without the Holy Spirit's aid I could never live up to God's expectations as to how I am to love. Which is in selfless love toward others.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Love" is the Greek noun ἀγάπη (agape), Strong's Greek dictionary noun number 26, which is selfless love that seeks what is best for others.

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Thanks be to God that He is love [1 John 4:8,16]! Then in 1 John 4:9-10 you are taught that,  
*By this the love of God was manifested in (you), that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that (you) might live through Him. In this is love, not that (you) loved God, but that He loved (you) and sent His Son to be the atonement for (your) sins.*

Now consider Ephesians 4:30-32 where the Holy Spirit moved Paul to write that you are to,  
<sup>[30]</sup> ... not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.  
<sup>[31]</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>[32]</sup> And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

In Ephesians 3:16-19 Paul is moved to pray that the Ephesians then and I believe you and I today might,  
<sup>[16]</sup> ... be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner [person]; <sup>[17]</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded IN LOVE, <sup>[18]</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>[19]</sup> and TO KNOW the LOVE of Christ which surpasses knowledge, THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED UP TO ALL the FULLNESS of God.

I thank God that in Ephesians 2:4-7 the Holy Spirit moved Paul to write saying,  
<sup>[4]</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, BECAUSE of HIS GREAT LOVE with which HE LOVED (you),  
<sup>[5]</sup> even when (you) were dead in (your) transgressions, made (you) alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>[6]</sup> and raised (you) up with Him, and SEATED (you) TOGETHER WITH HIM in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, <sup>[7]</sup> in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward (you) in Christ Jesus.

Will you please now join with me in prayer?

O Father God, today I come before You humbly giving You a gift of thanksgiving! I am thankful for the great love with which You love us! As I ponder the greatness of Your love, I am convicted of how much I fall short of loving You and others around me the way I should. However, I am also amazed that even though I fall short of loving the way I should, that You still promise to raise us up with You, and seat us together with You and Christ in the heavenly places! I now pray and give You thanksgiving as I ask You to answer this prayer by the authority that is in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen!

Please meditate and pray on these things!

Louise and I pray this will help to both enlighten and encourage you to **know in a greater way** the **One** Who promises in His Word to never leave you nor forsake you [Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6,8]!

*BECAUSE HE, THROUGH THE WAY HE LOVES ME,  
IS TEACHING ME HOW TO LOVE OTHERS! – tom*